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NATIONAL PORTRAITS

By

VANCE PALMER

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FOREWORD

THIS book attempts to show the lifework of certain significant figures in our history. Significant? The word is challenging. Yet since there is no scientific test of a man's importance, I have selected these figures either because of their representative character, or because they seemed to me true pioneers, originating ideas and tapping springs that were later to enrich the national life. Sir Henry Parkes, for instance, was chosen for the first reason: Louis Buvelot, for the second. Neither could claim greatness in an absolute sense. Parkes was an inveterate politician and Buvelot lacked genius; but the one was landmark over a long period of history, and the other unlocked a new world, turning the eyes of our painters to their own landscape.

In general the attention of this book has been concentrated on men with some creative impulse rather than on administrators or politicians. The reason is clear. History, as written in Australia, at any rate till recently, has been largely preoccupied with changes of government and the attitudes of men holding political power. This gives it a strange lack of content. To record governmental acts is all very well, but what is the life beneath this formal crust? What are the ideas, conflicts, and economic developments that have given the country a character of its own? With such an inquiry in mind, it would seem that men were of importance in so far as they contributed to this inner leavening. Consequently little consideration has here been given either to the standard figures of politics or to those artists, scientists and explorers whose main work, highly valuable as it was, has been done abroad—men like Grafton Smith, Dr "Chinese" Morrison, and Will Dyson.

But one obvious lack in this book is any reference to the work of women. Surely, it will be said, there have been some women in Australia of marked creative ability or personal distinction! Quite so. *The Peaceful Army*, a very fine volume edited by Flora Eldershaw and devoted to such women, is my sole but sufficient reason for not including some of them here.

Finally this book makes no pretence to special research. The facts in it came from authorities such as those acknowledged at the back, from the newspapers of the time, or occasionally from the memories of people still living.

VANCE PALMER.

THE LANDTAKER

John Macarthur

UNDOUBTEDLY the most dynamic figure in the first thirty years of Australian development was John Macarthur. He would have been outstanding on any stage, for his daemonic energy and restless intelligence (he admired the character of Coriolanus, his son said) were united with a craft in the management of men and a fanatical belief that any furtherance of his own interests made for the public good. To an extent he was justified in his belief; he happened, whether by luck or intuition, to ally himself with the unknown potencies of the country, and history has been generous to him. Or are the idealizations of the schoolbooks really generous? Now that the quality of Australian wool is recognized in every quarter of the globe it is easy to place a halo around the head of John Macarthur, who made the first experiments in crossing different breeds of sheep; but the ornament seems out of keeping with the rebellious mocking features. Macarthur had his own virtues, but they were not those of a saint.

"His employment during the eleven years he has been here," wrote Governor King in 1801, "has been that of making a large fortune, helping his brother-officers to make small ones (mostly at the publick expence), and sowing discord and strife. . . . Experience has convinced every man in the colony that there are no resources which art, cunning, impudence, and a pair of basilisk eyes can afford that he does not put into practice to obtain any point he undertakes."

Some allowance must be made for the heated imagination of an exasperated governor, struggling with a man whose character was more forcible than his own; some for the

extravagance that marked all those early quarrels; but it is probably a fair enough picture of Macarthur and his activities. The only thing it misses is the touch of creative genius that can be set against his rapacity.

He had come to Sydney in 1790 with the Second Fleet, a young subaltern with a wife and child, ambitious, eager for advancement, sanguine about the chances the new life offered. Exile meant less to him than to the other officers, for his family had been used to exile: his father had fought with Bonnie Prince Charlie, and after Culloden Moor had fled to the West Indies, finally returning to Plymouth and rearing a family. But to young John, south-west England could never be the home of his ancestors. Obviously he was a restless and dissatisfied youth: he entered the army but retired on ensign's half-pay, studied agriculture, engaged in the millinery business (he was called Jack Bodice afterwards by his enemies), read law and history, ultimately went back to the army and volunteered for the New South Wales Corps in 1789. So was started the adventure "from which," as his young wife wrote, "we have every reasonable expectation of reaping the most material advantage."

Yet whatever form the expectations took, Sydney could not, at first, have held out much hope of their fulfilment. It was a ragged penal settlement on the shores of a wooded harbour, a settlement into which Governor Phillip had been trying, without much success, to introduce some elementary order. As yet it depended almost entirely on food-supplies from overseas, and when the Second Fleet arrived it was in the grip of famine. A drought had withered up the few vegetables that were being grown on the banks of the Tank Stream; even water was short; governor, troops, and convicts were alike making shift on a meagre weekly ration. And the Second Fleet, with its burden of sick and sullen prisoners, brought new problems rather than relief. Small wonder that Macarthur, during his first two years of service, looked chiefly for promotion and ultimate return to England.

He was not the sort of man to settle down contentedly to routine, whether that of soldier or administrator. He was

pugnacious, self-assertive, enterprising, resentful of any discipline that curbed his natural impulses. His character, even thus early, was written in his face, in the sharp, aggressive nose, the coldly-penetrating brown eyes (the basilisk eyes Governor King talked about), and the contemptuous pout of his underlip. Conflict was a necessary part of his life; before his ship, the *Neptune*, had left England he had fought a duel with Gilbert, the master, and when Gilbert was replaced had quarrelled with his successor and with Nepean, the captain. In fact, before the voyage was completed he found it convenient to transfer, with his family, to another ship, the *Scarborough*. Yet among a crowd of officers who had mainly enlisted in the New South Wales Corps because it offered them a way out of trouble or a life of comparative laxity, his intelligence and driving force were just as marked as his touchiness. It was hard for such a man to settle down, under Phillip, to the regular performance of petty duties, the superintendence of convicts, the maintenance of some sort of discipline among the guards.

His chance came when, in 1792, Phillip resigned his governorship because of ill-health, and his place was taken by vice-regents, first Grose, then Paterson of the New South Wales Corps. The age of enterprise had begun. Macarthur was given the job of Paymaster to the Regiment and granted 100 acres of good land on the banks of the river close to Parramatta. "Prospects in the colony," his wife wrote, "have considerably brightened up." They had: at any rate for the officers of the corps. Phillip, believing that the interests of his officers should be confined to their military duties, had steadily set his face against granting them land; but now the pressure began to be applied against such limitations. Agriculture was extremely profitable: besides, wasn't it necessary to stimulate the food-supplies of the colony? What better incentive to production than to spread the chance of profits over as wide an area as possible?

At that time there were few free settlers in the colony, and society consisted of the handful of officers and officials, who with their wives tried to keep up a tradition of eighteenth-

century elegance, making picnic-parties about the harbour, botanizing, quoting Pope and Rousseau, professing a sentimental interest in the natives, those rude creatures of the wild. The convicts—forgers, political rebels, pickpockets—were not interesting. In their airy way the ladies and gentlemen of this strange regime contrived to create a social atmosphere as detached as possible from that of the system on which their lives were based, but the detachment was more apparent than real: callousness and brutality were all around them and they were subtly corrupted by their own attempts to ignore it.

Macarthur was a man particularly impervious to atmosphere, or to influences that had nothing to do with his own interest. He settled down in a practical way to make the most of the opportunities offered him. By August 1794, he had 250 acres, of which upwards of 100 were under cultivation: a year later his farm had nearly doubled itself in extent. He was an enthusiastic agriculturist, and had won the prize of 100 acres given by Grose to the first officer who got 50 acres under crop: but soon he was in a position to smile at such small rewards. It was a golden time for the man who had a footing on the land. There was a ready market for farm-produce at the government store: grain brought 10s. a bushel and beef from 4s. to 5s. a pound, while assigned servants could be had for the asking. The country around Parramatta began to take on an idyllic look, with almond, apricot and pear-trees abloom in spring and the paddocks shimmering with young wheat. Elizabeth Farm, the home of the Macarthurs, became in a little while the show place of the colony.

But there were other avenues of enterprise being opened up, some even more lucrative than farming. Ships were beginning to arrive at Sydney from various quarters, and the officers and others with credit in England had the privilege of buying up the cargoes—tea, sugar, rum, articles of clothing—and retailing them on their own terms. Strong in the corps spirit they made a bond not to underbuy or undersell one another, and sometimes their profits rose to 500 per cent. The

officers developed into expert hucksters, and even the soldiers had to take their payments in kind, according to Holt, one of the leaders of the Irish Rebellion of 1798.

"What will you have?" he pictures a paymaster asking, "I have very good tobacco, ten shillings the pound, good tea at twenty shillings the pound, and prints at eight shillings the yard."

And when the soldier protested that he preferred money to these things he was threatened with a flogging for impertinence.

The most profitable monopoly was rum, and soon it became a medium of exchange and a potent source of corruption. Ex-convicts, both servants and settlers, were encouraged to take rum for every kind of payment, and an atmosphere of debauchery spread over the settlement. It is true that Hunter, when appointed Governor in 1795, made an attempt to control the traffic, but during the interregnum the Rum Corps had established itself firmly in the saddle, and Hunter, being a weak man, gradually adapted himself to the situation. The affair of Dr Balmain was enough to show him in whose hands power really lay. Balmain, as Chief Surgeon, had tried to punish some soldiers who had assaulted one Baughn for objecting to the rum traffic, but the threat of prosecution brought the whole scattered corps of officers into action. Such a gross insult to their uniform! It was enough to make their blood boil. The injured man and his wife were frightened into silence, and Balmain was warned that he was interfering with affairs of the regiment and that unless he desisted he would be pursued to the death by one challenge after another. It was no use appealing to the law. The law was the Rum Corps, who controlled not only its own courts martial, but the criminal court of the colony.

In this episode the agent of the Rum Corps was John Macarthur. Because of a quarrel with Hunter he had retired from his position as superintendent of government agriculture, but he still held his commission, and though mainly engaged in building up his private fortunes, was quick to rally his brother-officers together when there was any question of their

common privileges being infringed. An experiment had led him to believe that the country was suitable for producing fine-woolled sheep. He had crossed some Irish rams with hardy, long-haired Bengal ewes, and the resulting progeny had carried an interesting mixture of hair and wool. Later he had managed to get hold of some merino sheep from the Cape, and was able to continue his experiments. These convinced him that his future lay, not in agriculture, but in breeding sheep. The price of farm-produce, he argued, might go down ruinously as more land was taken up, but if he could produce something for export, something capable of being shipped, without injury, to the world-markets overseas, his fortune was assured. (Or, as he liked to put it, the finances of the colony would be permanently benefited.) There were other men to whom the same idea had occurred, men like Waterman and the Rev. Samuel Marsden, but none pursued it with the same unremitting ardour. From then on, though he was a devoted husband and father, a man, too, with a certain interest in literature and science, Macarthur may be said to have lived for his sheep.

He was lucky in getting the authorities overseas interested in his enterprise. A visit to England in 1800 broke the ground for him: another a year later had even more fortunate results. He had to make it compulsorily, for a quarrel with King, who had relieved Hunter, had ultimately brought him into collision with Paterson, his commanding officer, whom he wounded in a duel. He was sent to England under arrest, for trial by court martial: and on the voyage made a chance friendship that was to stand him in good stead later on. At Amboyna, where the ship had to seek shelter, he came in contact with Sir Robert Farquhar, who was under the censure of the Indian authorities for having made an unprovoked attack on a neighbouring Dutch settlement. Farquhar, distressed about his future career, spoke of writing an apologetic letter to the Governor-General and Council, but Macarthur's advice was characteristic:

"If you write such a letter," he said, "you will be laid on the shelf for life. Tell them they are not fully aware of the

position of the Dutch settlement, or the circumstances of your attacking it; that you are convinced of the necessity for taking it, and that you are determined to renew the attack. Having thus written, do so, and *mind you take the place.*"

The true imperial touch! It came instinctively to Macarthur. His advice was followed successfully by Farquhar, whose father was physician to the Prince of Wales (afterwards George IV) and was closely related to the secretary of Lord Camden, then Secretary of State for the Colonies. Good fortune had brought Macarthur close to the seat of patronage and he grasped his chances with quick hands. Soon he was in contact with Camden himself. The French invasion of the Peninsula had made English manufacturers uncertain about their supplies of Spanish wool, and Macarthur with tireless ardour dinned into the ears of authority the importance of the new sources being opened up under the Southern Cross. He showed examples of his wool to the cloth manufacturers. He drafted schemes for the formation of a public company that would develop the industry in a large way for the imperial good. He addressed a memorial to the committee of the Privy Council, pointing out the various possibilities of wool-growing in Australia, and offering, in case Government did not care to venture into the business, to "most cheerfully commence it" himself "with an allotment of Ten Thousand Acres of Land and permission to select Thirty Convicts for Shepherds."

In the end his lobbying, his energy and plausibility, had their effect. Camden, in spite of some cold criticism of the project from Sir Joseph Banks (the usual adviser in matters relating to New South Wales), was impressed by him. He argued that Macarthur should be allowed to sell his commission in the Army (the court martial being now forgotten) and, in consideration of devoting himself to the production of merino wool, that he should receive a grant of not less than 5000 acres in the Cowpastures on which to graze his flocks.

Thus when Macarthur returned to Sydney in 1805 it was in triumph—"the hero of the fleece" Governor King called

him dryly, though ready now to placate this man who had won such favour in high places. Macarthur, in addition to his letter from Lord Camden, had brought back a ship to be used in trading ventures and four Spanish merino rams from the Royal flocks at Kew. He was on the crest of the wave. The lands he wanted had been unlocked for him, he was free from army discipline, and those in power overseas had blessed his ventures. It is true that King showed some reluctance in alienating the public grazing-lands at Cowpastures.

"As this is some of the best land yet discovered," Macarthur wrote to Under-Secretary Cooke soon after his return, "it would appear that Governor King is desirous to reserve it for the exclusive use of the wild cattle, but I hope that the peaceful and productive sheep will find in you an advocate that they may be indulged with a part, at least, of this healthy and luxuriant pasture."

So much solicitude for the welfare and personal tastes of sheep, both living and unborn! It would almost seem that Macarthur had forgotten his own financial interest in the venture, his ambition, in the phrase of those days, "to create a solid establishment." But, in due time, the Cowpasture grants were made out, and in spite of the shortage of convict-labour "to thresh the settlers' wheat for our daily food" (as King reminded him) Macarthur received all the servants he wanted.

His future was not completely assured, though, for trouble appeared again in a few months with the appointment of Bligh as Governor. For once Macarthur was faced with a man whose will was as strong as his own, a man it was impossible either to browbeat or subvert by diplomacy. Bligh, as a naval captain, was a rigid disciplinarian: his unbending nature had led to the mutiny on the *Bounty*: and he had come to Sydney fully impressed by the authority of his new position. Besides, since he was the friend and nominee of Sir Joseph Banks, he may be supposed to have had some prejudice against Macarthur. But conflict was inevitable for other than personal reasons. Scandalous stories about the racketeering of the Rum Corps had reached the ears of

authorities overseas. It was felt that a clean-up was necessary, an abolition of the privileges the officers and their friends had seized, a return to the original plan of a convict-and-small-farmer colony, run, at the same time, in the interests of the expatriated settler and of the Government who had thought it necessary to get rid of him. Bligh was just the man to carry out such a commission. Being a sailor he had no associations with the military, no particular sympathy with their corps spirit. He entered on his duties with a determination to break their power, and to augment that of the regime and of the small settlers growing food along the Hawkesbury. From the first his hand was heavy on the privileged gentlemen of the Rum Corps.

"Liberty has retired from us into the pathless wilds . . ." wrote Mrs Macarthur.

It was a struggle between a conception of government, feudal or paternal, and the claim to an unhampered pursuit of wealth that had marked eighteenth-century industrialism. Macarthur and his friends were, really, in the position of the manufacturers who fought the Factory Acts and all legal restrictions on the exploitation of the new resources: but the new resources, in Australia, happened to be pastoral. They wanted more land, more free labour, a judiciary responsive to their needs. They were accustomed to identify these needs with the interests of the country.

Inevitably the struggle took legal forms, often complicated ones: just as inevitably Macarthur was the man around whom it centred. There was a dispute about parts of a still which Macarthur had imported and Bligh had seized: there was a further dispute about a breach of the port regulations. Macarthur's schooner had taken a stowaway convict to the Islands, and when it returned to Sydney it was seized by the naval officers until the £900 which, it was claimed, had been forfeited on bond was paid. Thereupon Macarthur shut off supplies to the master and seamen, forcing them to come on shore; and when a warrant was issued for his arrest he resisted it.

"His object," says his son, James, "was to drive the Governor into violent and precipitate measures."

If so, his object was accomplished. It only needed the arrest of Macarthur to bring the simmering discontent of the officers and their friends to a head and to create a situation that demanded action. When he had been freed on bail, Macarthur vigorously impressed it on his cronies that the liberties of the colony were at stake: that Bligh was a madman who would stop at nothing: that he himself had been in danger of murder by hireling warders. The leader of the military was Colonel Johnston who, after a regimental dinner at which there had been many threats against Bligh, was suffering a recovery at his home in Parramatta. Driving into Sydney he found himself in the middle of a crisis, with officers talking excitedly in the barrack-square, and he weakly asked Macarthur what to do. Macarthur, always the man of action, could give him precise directions. In the name of the free citizens of the colony (there were a handful hanging about the barrack-square), he wrote out a petition for the arrest of the Governor, resting the paper on a gun-carriage.

In such a manner was the downfall of Bligh brought about and the power of the Rum Corps, for a time, re-established.

"I have been deeply engaged all this day on contending for the liberties of this unhappy colony . . ." wrote Macarthur that night. "The Tyrant is now, no doubt, gnashing his teeth with vexation at his overthrow."

Tradition has largely accepted his point of view. There has grown up a legend of Bligh as an irresponsible tyrant, stamping out the liberties of the country with a heavy heel till driven to a coward's refuge under the bed by that sturdy champion of the people, John Macarthur.

But the people of the time did not look at it in that way. It was not the view of the Rev. Samuel Marsden: certainly not that of the free settlers of the Hawkesbury, who were probably, as King had suggested ruefully, "tinctured with the democratic spirit of the times before they left England." They knew they had not much to expect from a rebel administration with the pliable Johnston at its head, and the land-

hungry Macarthur directing affairs as Secretary of State. In a petition of 1 May 1808, they sued for Bligh's return:

"With pleasure we saw the colony reviving from the most melancholy calamity, the streams of justice purified, crimes of the deepest dye prevented, discipline established, a system of monopoly and extortion in some measure suppressed, that had been long and severely felt by us and our families, nearly to the deprivation of every comfort."

The rebels were, in fact, not happy in their triumph, either under Johnston, Foveaux, or Paterson. There was no common idea to bind them together: they quarrelled among themselves, accused one another of peculations, competed for the spoils. The military officers were unsure of their legal position. Macarthur, the only one of the crowd who had any fixed purpose or revolutionary courage, thought they were a poor lot: but his own position was becoming increasingly uncertain. Before Macquarie, the new Governor, arrived with instructions to arrest and try him for his part in the rebellion he had departed with his two sons for England.

From then began a term of exile which lasted nearly nine years. Macarthur could not be prosecuted in England since he was not subject to military law, but neither could he return to Australia safely till the instructions to Macquarie were revoked. He was assiduous in his efforts to prove that the circumstances of the time and place made rebellion against Bligh necessary. Both he and Johnston had friends in high places, but then so had Bligh: and rebellion, he found, had an ugly sound in England where those struggling for economic power had always been forced to respect legal forms and traditions. The atmosphere which had been so favourable to him on his last visit was now bleaker. On the whole the sympathies of the governing groups were with Bligh, who represented imperial law and order, and the court martial that found Johnston guilty of mutiny and cashiered him virtually gave its decision against Macarthur, too.

His position was unfortunate. While Macquarie's instructions held, there was no chance of his being able to return to his family and his sheep: he lobbied and manoeuvred to

get these instructions quashed, but all his efforts failed. For a while he entertained the idea of selling out his interests in Parramatta and bringing his family to England, but he was pessimistic about the future there. England was played out, ruined: the agricultural interests were perishing, and the nation was doomed to go through a "fiery ordeal." Revolution, perhaps! Besides, Australia had a firmer hold on him than he had guessed. The boys, too, James and Willie, felt the call of it: they talked eagerly of returning "home," though John was studying law in the Temple, and Edward, who had now a commission in the Army, had formed other attachments. By many ties Macarthur was bound to the country of his adoption. His wife's letters made it near and living to him. She wrote entertainingly of Elizabeth Farm, of the girls' interests, of the new large woolshed, of the three gentlemen who had at last crossed the Blue Mountains. Her spirit, and her capacity for running the estate, helped him to endure his enforced exile.

Yet the management of affairs was not left entirely in her hands. From London he poured out his streams of advice to her. She was to spare no pains in culling the Spanish merino flocks; she was never to dispatch any letter without a return of stock, the quantity of each kind sold in the preceding quarter, and the prices; she must put up the wool in better condition, and see that more pains were taken in sorting the fleeces. His own investigations in the wool-market had been highly valuable to him. He had visited the warehouses and seen how the bales looked when they were opened up; he had learnt the prejudice of buyers against wool that was carelessly washed, against wool that was too curly in the staple. Every day he was picking up information of prime importance to him in the main business of his life.

In March 1815, he set out for Paris with his two younger sons for an extended tour, and next year they were wandering through the south of France, the journey being accomplished chiefly on foot in order to give them greater facilities for acquiring agricultural knowledge. Two vignerons from Montpellier accompanied them: Macarthur had a plan for growing

he suspected, of the judicial authorities) withdrew a magistracy he had offered him. That snub reminded him that the Bligh episode was not forgotten. He could not call Brisbane to account, but he challenged Judge Barron Field to a duel, though nothing came of it. In spite of the way fortune was still favouring him (he had received the extra 5000 acres that Camden promised and was adding to his estate by lease and purchase) he was seized by fits of black depression. He suffered from wandering gout: he often passed weeks "without one cheerful moment!" And the merino interest was not developing as fast as it should. Even his sons, James and William, did not quite fulfil expectations. They had not "sufficient hardness of character to manage the people placed under their control, and they set too little value upon money."

His cold but turbulent spirit could not fully enjoy a period of peace. He had conquered, but his victory was not acknowledged: it had the feeling of a compromise. The compromise was, in fact, between two forces—traditional authority and insurgent capitalism—and conflicts which had taken centuries in older societies were being resolved abruptly in this embryo. Macarthur, however, naturally saw the matter as a personal one. The public lands had been burst open, but there were still checks on those who would exploit them with energy. And these were, too often, "clever scoundrels," mere emancipists.

"Your father is *low* and complaining," wrote his wife in 1830.

Yet when he died, four years later, he had made for himself a secure place in history. Through his tireless ardour and his instinct for experiment, a wool-industry had been created that for long was to be the chief material asset of the country. Ruthless in his pursuit of his own interests, narrow in his human sympathies, an unscrupulous exploiter of other men, he had yet contributed to the public good. Perhaps it would be churlish to deny him his halo.

THE MILITARY DICTATOR

Lachlan Macquarie

WHEN Lachlan Macquarie arrived in New South Wales, at the end of 1809, with a commission to act as Governor, the colony had just reached its majority. Considerable developments had taken place in the twenty-one years since Phillip had landed his shiploads of sullen convicts on the scrubby shores of Port Jackson. A compact little town had sprung into being, with wharves, inns, stores, and clusters of squat government buildings. Already Sydney had a population of over 6000, and there were small auxiliary settlements at Parramatta and along the Hawkesbury. It was no longer a simple society of convicts and military officials. Some of the convicts had been freed, others had an illusory freedom under the ticket-of-leave system, officers had become landowners, and there were a few independent settlers. With the dancing of small boats on the water, the bustle of movement ashore—carts bringing produce in to the government stores, workmen engaged on new buildings, women hanging out washing in the open squares—Sydney had lost its first sinister look of a penal settlement.

But in reality it was still nothing but that. There had been no growth of civil institutions: the governor was (in theory) absolute dictator, responsible to no one but a remote British Cabinet. Justice was handed out by a court, consisting of a judge-advocate and six officers from the Army or Navy, but the judge-advocate had no independent status: he was really only an officer himself. And the natural movement against such autocracy had been thwarted by divisions among the settlers themselves. They already formed two classes: on the one hand, there were the small traders and the farmers who

worked their own holdings; on the other, the aggressive ex-officers of the Rum Corps who had overthrown Bligh, and now ruled the roost, since the balance of economic power had been tilted in their favour. Macquarie had been sent to carry out the fixed policy of the British Government, which regarded the colony as, primarily, a penal settlement and aimed at making it self-supporting, its food and supplies coming from the industry of an increasing number of small holders (freed convicts) who would be settled on their own land. It was the attempt to carry out this policy that had brought Bligh into conflict with Macarthur and the rum-traffickers who were debauching the small farmers and getting hold of their land and stock. There is no doubt that he felt he was acting according to the terms of his commission.

Macquarie's first duty was to report on the Bligh affair, and a struggle of conflicting loyalties is apparent in his awkward phrases. His leanings as a soldier (he had lived in what he called "that school of subordination" for thirty years) were towards his own branch of the service: his sympathies as a governor were with Bligh, whom he had met when that crusty sea-dog was in charge of the *Bounty*. On the whole he felt it would be better to smooth the matter over. Macarthur and Colonel Johnston had gone to England on a merchant-vessel: Bligh was soon to follow them on his own quarter-deck. Let the English courts decide between them.

But he was soon facing the same problem Bligh had faced, though in an atmosphere that had cleared a little, and with more efficient means of asserting his will. The Rum Corps had been recalled, and those ex-officers who still remained as landholders were more inclined to accept Macquarie, in that he was a soldier and not, as all his predecessors had been, a man from the Navy. Besides he had his own regiment with him, and the natural authority of a Highland chief. He was a member of the clan of Ulva ("for I'm the chief of Ulva's Isle"), and he had the consciousness of it in his bearing. He was distinguished-looking, paternal, proud. After much active service in all parts of the world he had been for three years

Assistant Adjutant-General in London, and had left behind him, in official circles, a good reputation.

With him on the ship had come Ellis Bent, a lawyer from the Northern Circuit, who was to take up the position of Judge-Advocate. A quiet, cultured man, Bent was pliable in social ways, but when it came to matters of law his rigid respect for legal tradition and for the dignity of the judicial office gave point to his tongue and his pen. This was to bring him into conflict with Macquarie later on, but for the period of the voyage and for some time afterwards they were close friends: and it must be said that the appointment of a man like Bent to the position of Judge-Advocate did a great deal to appease those who were striving for free institutions. For hitherto it had been accepted that the judges had much the same status as the six uniformed officers who sat with them on the Bench. They were part of the official machine, mere instruments of the Executive. Ellis Bent, with his almost pedantic veneration for Blackstone, could never be that.

Here, then, seemed a chance, although a little group had already gained possession of nearly half the alienated land, for the colony to start again under fresh auspices, on the policy Phillip had begun. Soon the stream of convicts, which had slackened off a little, would be producing large supplies of labour for Macquarie to use in construction schemes. The industrial revolution, that had made England wealthy and powerful at a tremendous cost in human misery, was getting rid of its by-products. It was the end of an age in which the common lands were enclosed, and the villagers of Merrie England driven into manufacturing towns or left to pick up any sort of living they could as farm labourers or poachers. In the spreading centres of industrialism a new proletariat had been created, a proletariat that bred rapidly, for children were nearly as useful as adults in pushing trucks along the coal galleries or tending the machines. Wages were low, for any attempts at organization on the part of the workers were met with savage resistance. The doctrine of free competition had become almost a religion with the suc-

cessful middle-class: what else had unleashed these productive forces that gave them their power! They cultivated a cold-blooded rationalism and turned their eyes from the stews of their industrial cities to the laden clippers at the docks or the pageantry of Whitehall.

Realistic accounts of this England—the England of rising industrialism—are rare in the literature of the time, which cultivated a French elegance or a pastoral simplicity. One has to look for the sober truth in the pictures of Hogarth or the poems of Crabbe and Blake. But the records of the courts speak openly enough and they show a country where respect for private property was widely repudiated by those who stole the goose from the common, and harshly enforced by those who had stolen the common from the goose. Probably never before in the history of civilization was thieving so general. The prisons could not hold all the offenders that punitive laws were creating for them. At first the overflow had been shipped to Virginia: now it was coming to New South Wales.

It would be foolish to pretend that most of the convict-population of Sydney, whom Macquarie was to govern, were conscious rebels against tyranny or mere experimenters in petty larceny. Probably there was a fair sprinkling of men who would have been criminals in any society, those with a pathological twist or a bent towards violence. And the brutal conditions of the "system" would have made others irredeemable wrecks. But the fact remains that in this new lax community, where rum was a sort of currency and regulations hard to enforce, crimes of violence were not so numerous per head of population as in England. And though the licensed houses of "the Rocks," the bad quarter of the town, were supposed to be dens of vice, an observer has stated that they compared favourably, in point of conduct, with those in most parts of London. But a dark stigma rested on the word "convict," and the people in power had social and economic reasons for keeping it there. Never before had the privileged classes been so conscious of their rights, so intent that they should remain unquestioned. The landowners and officials were

more tolerant of petty thieves than of Scottish reformers, Irish rebels, or English sailors concerned in the mutiny of the Nore.

Macquarie had naturally all the prejudices of his class. He was a Tory, a rigid Episcopalian, a man who had lived in a purely military world. But he was before everything a spontaneous and warm-blooded human being, with a hearty dislike of humbug, and perhaps an ancestral memory of the unity of social life in the clan. There was a streak of *naïveté* in him, as lovable as it was odd. He thought he could discourage the blacks' raids on free settlers by putting up notices in the bush asking them to behave, and the convicts reaching Sydney Harbour were met with homilies on the good life. In all this, Macquarie's natural impulses harmonized with the policy he had been sent out to restore. He never forgot that the colony had been established as a settlement for convicts, and that it was his duty to turn as many as possible into free citizens. Before he had been very long in Sydney he was tilting against the moral pretensions of the wealthy landjobbers and rum-traffickers, their claim to have an eternal superiority over all who had come out in transports. He invited emancipists to his table: he encouraged his officers to do the same. When he thought it advisable he raised them to the Bench. All his energy and activity was devoted to breaking down the division between those who had done time and those who had not.

"At my first entrance into this colony," he wrote to Commissioner Bigge afterwards, "I felt as you do, and I believe I may add every one does—at that moment I certainly did not anticipate any intercourse but that of control, with men who were or had been convicts. A short experience showed me, however, that some of the most meritorious men of the few to be found, and who were most capable and willing to exert themselves in the public service, were men who had been convicts!"

There was, for instance, the Rev. Henry Fulton, who had been transported for suspected complicity in the Irish Rebellion. Redfern, an ex-officer of the Navy, was another such: he had been condemned because, as a young man at the Nore, he had been overheard telling some of the sailors they ought

to stick together. Then there was Francis Greenway, the architect, who had been sent out for concealing assets in bankruptcy, and carried a letter from Phillip, whom he had known in Bath. It is certain that men like these were morally superior to most of the get-rich-quick adventurers of the Rum Corps, and it is to Macquarie's credit that he recognized it. But it brought him into conflict with the influential members of the community, even with gentle conservatives like Ellis Bent.

His first economic problem was the land question. Already great inroads had been made upon the public estate. Nearly 120,000 acres had been alienated—a considerable amount at the time, for the pass across the Blue Mountains had not yet been discovered, and the only fertile land available was in small areas around Parramatta and along the Hawkesbury. Naturally the eyes had been picked out of these regions—Macarthur and two of his friends were ensconced in the rich Cowpastures, where they were breeding sheep with the help of more than a hundred convicts each. It had been the practice of governors to make grants of land prodigally: sometimes to their officers as wedding-presents. The excuse in the beginning was that the production of food was to be encouraged at all costs: the land to any one who had capital to work it! Convict-labour could be secured at £10 per head, each man being supplied with stores from the Government, and since the nominal wages were mainly taken out in tea, tobacco, and clothing, the cost was a cipher. Yet servile labour is always inefficient, and the general results of this land policy were poor, the community being unable to feed itself.

For one thing many of the grantees were men who never intended to work the land, and sometimes sold it without seeing it. Thus land had to earn interest on invested capital: overhead costs were already being built up. There was no market for beef and produce except the government stores, and when the price set was low farmers killed their stock to eat and fed their corn to the pigs. Few of them had any real knowledge of agriculture, or any devotion to the soil: they cropped it assiduously without giving it rest or putting any-

thing back. When it was worked out they could probably sell it to some newcomer.

Macquarie, with his mind on the crofters of his own country, aimed at making settlement on the land a real thing. All the grants issued by him contained three new clauses. The first prohibited any transfer or alienation within five years of the receipt of the grant. If this were violated the grant would be null and void and the land revert to the Crown. The other two clauses directed, under the same penalty, that certain proportions of the whole area were to be cleared and planted within five years.

But no provision was made for regular reserves adjacent to each grant, so that the State might benefit by unearned increment as the country developed. And even Macquarie's regulations were hard to implement. There was no respect for a morality that was merely based on the general good. Ellis Bent, the Judge-Advocate, for instance, had such fastidious feelings about the purity of his court that he could not brook the appointment of emancipists like Simeon Lord, the Parramatta manufacturer, to the Bench: but he cheerfully sold his own grant and that made to his twin sons before the time was up. He genuinely respected the traditions of English law: he could uphold them in a subtle and nervous English that made Macquarie seem like an inarticulate schoolboy; and he always acted up to his own ideas of integrity. The only trouble was that these had been formed in a fixed and limited society and were inadequate for a fluid one.

Yet definite progress was being achieved, new roads being surveyed, substantial buildings erected, and fresh areas of country opened for settlement by the discovery of the pass over the Blue Mountains. The steady spate of convicts supplied all the labour that was needed, the only trouble being the increasing expenditure. Greenway, the young architect, had plans for the wholesale remodelling of Sydney. He would have a cathedral set in a circus, from which all the principal roads would radiate, a palace of justice in a forest of corinthian columns, a series of fortifications along the harbour, and handsome stone quays. Macquarie en-

couraged him in his dreams, appointing him Colonial Architect at three shillings a day; and a more beautiful Sydney might have been created, if the support had been continued. But construction costs were mounting up and the Colonial Office becoming worried: the settlement, Macquarie was reminded, was living beyond its means. He agreed, and Greenway's plans fell victim to the new economy.

The truth was that Macquarie lived by impulse rather than principle, and this gave an impromptu character to his administration. On all sides it was becoming involved in contradictions. For example there was the creation of a proper hospital. Very soon after he came to Sydney it became apparent to Macquarie that one was needed: the authorities had an increasing number of sick to deal with and all the accommodation available was a tumble-down building erected in Phillip's day. But where were the funds to come from? A trio of bright entrepreneurs—Simeon Lord, D'Arcy Wentworth, and Blaxcell—offered to build the hospital on contract, their terms being the sole right to import liquor into the colony for general consumption. In spite of Macquarie's campaign against the rum-traffic the terms were accepted. The hospital was built, and part of it remains standing to this day.

Then there was his attitude towards the granting of licences for selling spirits. He genuinely wanted to restrict the amount of drinking done in the colony, to banish the smell of rum that had hung about Sydney for the past twenty years. One feature of the town he had noted with disapproval was that many retail tradesmen, even bakers and butchers, held licences, and it was natural that they should encourage people to stay drinking in their shops. The orders Macquarie gave his magistrates were that there was to be a drastic reduction of licences, that nobody was to hold one except on the strongest evidence of good character. Yet a suppliant had only to come to him with a plausible tale of hardship, and he would grant a licence behind the backs of the magistrates. The amount of spirits drunk tended to increase rather than diminish.

In fact Macquarie was beginning to enjoy the exercise of

arbitrary power, for its own sake: it had become the spice of his life. When the Supreme Court was founded in 1814, and Bent's brother, Jeffrey Hart Bent, came out as judge, he met the first real rebellion against his authority. The conflict between them was ostensibly the right of emancipated attorneys to practise in court, but it really had root in their separate claims to power. Jeffrey Hart Bent had the same belief in the immaculate purity of the legal tradition as his brother, but unlike him he was pugnacious, impulsive, given to asserting himself. He disliked the idea of emancipist attorneys practising before him and insisted that local conditions could make no difference in such a matter. Even if the attorneys themselves were honest and reliable, that was not to be taken into account: all that mattered was that the dignity of the court should not suffer in the public mind. When the two magistrates who sat with him could not agree with his ruling he closed the Supreme Court until a decision came from Downing Street.

Macquarie was unable to interfere, but he objected that he was given no report of the matter. Bent asserted vigorously that none was needed.

"My functions," he said, "are entirely distinct from those of your Excellency, and in the exercise of them I am not accountable to any but to those to whom your Excellency is also accountable."

And he added that he was not placed under Macquarie's command either by the tenor of his commission, by His Majesty's Charter, or by any official instruction from the British Ministers.

The old prejudice against the emancipists sprang from the dust in which Macquarie had tried to tread it, and now it glowed with all the respectability of traditional law. Macquarie's authority was attacked in other ways by this aggressive young Englishman he had been so glad to welcome to the country. One of the Governor's earliest public works had been the building of a road that ran to Windsor through Parramatta, a distance of thirty-six miles. It had been of great advantage to the small farmers bringing in their pro-

duce, but the cost had been serious, in spite of the fact that the work had been carried out by convict labour. To liquidate the debt and provide a fund for the road's upkeep Macquarie erected turnpikes and instituted a system of tolls.

Bent denied the Governor's right to collect them since it meant the imposition of a tax. Something more important than a legal matter was in question, though: his own personal dignity had been affronted, for he had been granted exemption from payment as if he were an ordinary officer of the Government. In an insulting letter to Macquarie he refused the exemption and denied the Governor's right to offer it, for were they not equal in authority? Once when the toll-gates were shut against him he shook them open and galloped his horses through, afterwards denying there was any power that could summon him.

Autocracy, in the person of Macquarie, had met a check in this embodiment of Parliamentary law. The democratic Tory, with his muddled generous impulses, was up against the proud assertive Whig, who believed that his power rested on liberties won by all his countrymen. The Highland chief, rooted in a patriarchal past, had to face the eighteenth century Englishman, the representative of the triumphant middle-class. It was a situation that made Macquarie ponder in a worried way on the nature of his authority and on the problem of human rights. He became more stubborn in his support of the emancipists, he even let his sympathies extend to ordinary convicts. In July 1817, an incident occurred that was to give him a chance to prove his humanity. The *Chapman*, a transport captained by a man called Drake, arrived in Sydney with its crowd of convicts in irons, and a story of mutiny on the high seas in which the prisoners had been prevented with difficulty from seizing the ship. Seven of them had been shot down, others wounded. The captain, in defiance of Macquarie's request and the general custom, refused to take the irons off his prisoners until they had been landed and placed in the charge of the authorities ashore.

Soon all Sydney was aflame with the story, and there was

a remarkable outburst of public feeling. Most of the population knew the horror of transport-life, either by repute or from personal experience: they scouted the report of mutiny: wasn't that merely the old excuse for brutality and murder? There was the wildest excitement in the streets and in the taverns. Stories of actual happenings on the *Chapman* went from mouth to mouth. Demonstrations were made against the captain and officers of the ship and some of the crew were seized and beaten when they came ashore.

Macquarie was affected as much as any one by the stories that had leaked out. He seized the ship's register and instituted an inquiry into the whole affair. It revealed that there had been no real attempt at mutiny: the soldiers in a moment of panic had been ordered to fire into the packed hold. But the committee of inquiry was doubtful whether any action could be taken against the captain and officers of the *Chapman*. What charges could be laid against them? What jurisdiction could any court in the colony have over happenings on the high seas? The more difficulties that were pointed out to him, the more determined Macquarie became to bring the offenders to justice. He went from one law officer to another: he overrode their reports: he tried to force Barron Field, the new judge, to give an opinion that agreed with his own. And he made certain that the ship should not leave port without his consent, sending a military guard aboard with orders to fire on the officers if any attempt should be made to move it. When it became obvious that no action could be taken in Sydney against those whom he regarded as murderers, he arranged that they should be sent to England under guard, to answer either before a court martial or a court of criminal jurisdiction. Thirteen convict witnesses went with them.

Macquarie might have saved himself the trouble. The accused men were all acquitted after a perfunctory trial. And Macquarie himself received a cold rebuke for what was obviously looked upon as his fussiness in a trivial matter. He was reminded of the "public inconvenience" he had caused, and was rated particularly for having sent the convict

witnesses to England, "some of them of the worst description," and anyhow men incompetent to give evidence since they were unfree.

It was a blow to Macquarie: it stimulated him to further reflection on the social order. How much more effective it would have been if the matter had lain in his hands!

"Although I cannot but despair," he wrote, "of effectual justice being rendered by the mode I have, under the advice of the Judge-Advocate been induced to adopt, yet I still hope that sufficient may be effected at least to protect the persons of convicts in future on this passage hither from the cruelties and violence to which they have hitherto been, in a certain degree, exposed. . . ."

The private consolation of a generous man—a man to whom even the blacks were so human that he was moved to organize an annual feast for them at Parramatta, with a roasting of bullocks and a distribution of blankets! But he was suffering in his character as well as in his public works from the delusions that come to all dictators. Whatever he did must be right. The men who opposed him in anything must be self-seeking or corrupt: all who agreed with him must be paragons of virtue. He cultivated those it was easy to sway, quarrelled with those who showed independent will. And naturally the channels of his information tended to narrow: there was no newspaper but the *Government Gazette*, and only from his private supporters could he learn what was going on in the country. Administration was becoming a purely personal business, and even when he made good regulations there were no real means of ensuring that they were carried out. There was still confusion in the working of the rum-traffic and the land-laws, and it was worse confounded when free settlers began to arrive in greater numbers.

Then there was the wavering policy of the British Government. It no longer held firmly to the original plan of a peasant economy, based on freed convicts settled on small farms. Wasn't it possible that the growing wool-industry, with its opportunities for large-scale investment, and its capacity to absorb convict labour, might be the true path of development?

A general movement, supported by Samuel Marsden and the small settlers, as well as the old landowners, was making itself felt in favour of a more liberal form of government with trial by jury, freer trade, and an improved judiciary. Macquarie showed himself in sympathy with such a development. The social atmosphere had changed since the days when Macarthur and his handful of landowners could dominate the civil life and Macquarie had played his part in the change. His support had put a stiffening into the emancipists, made it easier for them to stand upright. They no longer gave way to ex-officers on the Sydney footpaths, or let an uneasy smirk twitch their lips when they joined in conversation at public dinners. There might still be a feeling of hostility against them on the part of the old nobility, but they were capable of meeting it.

And anyhow there were other forces at work creating a more complex society. The population had swelled to 40,000, and it included a considerable number of native-born, young people to whom the old divisions meant little. Observers at the time noted in this new generation the signs of an individual character. They were taller than their fathers, these youths and girls, loose-limbed and fair, with small features. Bigge, the Commissioner sent out by the British Government, remarked that New South Wales was unlike any other colony, in that the majority of settlers regarded it as a home. Macquarie's term of office had been a period of quick growth, of roots thrusting down hastily into a loose soil.

So his work ended. He brought to it nothing but the energy of an honest, impulsive, undistinguished man: but that happened, in the circumstances, to be enough. He had found the colony a ragged settlement, economically insecure, confined by a barrier of mountains, and rent by a quarrel between a naval autocrat and a junta of rich land-grabbers. He left it comparatively prosperous and peaceful, the capital adorned by decent public buildings, the back country of the Bathurst Plains opened up, the foundations of civil government laid.

THE CURRENCY LAD

John Batman

An atmosphere of sweetness and healthy vigour surrounds the figure of John Batman whenever we come across it. He was typical of the new generation that, in the early part of last century, was growing up around Sydney; of the young men from whom Macquarie wanted to form a squadron of dragoons, so dashing and high-spirited did they seem when they raced along the Windsor road or rode wildly without reins through the streets of Parramatta. But he had none of the complexes that made some of them aggressive in asserting their independence or their dignity. Physically big and powerful, buoyant in temperament, he was unaffected by the repressive influences around him. "Honest John" his friend Hume called him, and the adjective meant something positive in those days. He had no social ambitions, little of that consciousness of class and status which made life such a medley of small triumphs and humiliations for other men both free and bond. There was always something of a joke about his adventurous schemes, as when, after his absurd treaty with the natives of Port Phillip, he burst into John Pascoe Fawkner's inn at Launceston, calling out breezily:

"Look here, you fellows! I'm the biggest landowner in the world!"

Batman was born at Parramatta in 1800, the son of a small orchardist who grew fruit for the Sydney market. The district was a pleasant place for a growing boy in those days. Already it had an idyllic look, with planted hedges, blossoming orchards, and cattle cropping the green river flats. It was only when the convicts were mustered from the surrounding farms on Sunday and hung about the drinking dens after church

that the brutal framework of the settlement was laid bare. At such a time it was hardly possible to forget, in spite of the homely eloquence of the Rev. Samuel Marsden, that every post around had been a whipping-post at some time or other, that the Female Factory was still a place of horror, and that the reverend gentleman himself was more than a mere apostle of sweetness and light. In sober fact he was primarily a sheep-breeder and a magistrate. As the convicts themselves said:

"He prays for our souls on Sundays and takes it out of our bodies during the rest of the week."

But all these things were part of the accepted system, and no burden to a boy. Batman had plenty of friends of his own age. There was his brother Henry, there was Hamilton Hume, there was young White who, later, was to marry his sister Maria. In company with the black youngsters they explored the country around and picked up the bushcraft that was to prove so useful to them all. The idea of wonderful things to be discovered beyond their immediate frontiers was continually with them. Before he was fifteen, Hume, the eldest of them, had done some serious exploration, and with his brothers had discovered the new Berrima district, a little to the south. But the land had very limited possibilities for young men without capital of their own or the influence to procure a grant. Batman's father apprenticed him to a wheelwright in Sydney.

Probably that trade did not seem to offer much of a future either. The country around Parramatta might have had the breath of freedom in it for a boy: Sydney certainly held nothing of it for a young man. Any kind of manual work had a stigma on it. Early the gates of the barracks opened to let a stream of chained convicts out upon the town, and under guard they marched off in parties to their various tasks of building and road-mending. The only free men who competed with them in such labour had the status of "poor whites"—even the ticket-of-leave men sought to get hold of some small business as quickly as possible. Batman, intelligent and enterprising, looked about for an avenue of escape.

At the age of twenty he set off with his brother Henry for Van Diemen's Land.

The next ten years of his life were devoted to making his way in the new country. He took up a farm at Kingston, under the shadow of Ben Lomond, and soon was something of a figure among the handful of free settlers. There was a dash and charm about this young Parramatta native, who was a "good mixer" in the broadest sense of the term—as much at ease in Governor Arthur's drawing-room as among a crowd of blacks and convict-servants around a camp-fire in the bush. They forgave him his small masculine failings, his quick eye for a good-looking girl, his occasional fondness for one more glass. Even his unusual marriage was taken as a merely "romantic" affair. He had come across a young woman, an outlaw, in the ranges near his home and given her protection: afterwards, with the Governor's connivance, he secured her freedom and married her. She bore him a son and seven daughters, and his home life, for some years at least, was a pattern of domestic bliss.

Hobart, in those days, was not so exclusive as Sydney. But even the most malicious of social snobs would have found it hard to throw any mud that would stick to this warm-blooded, spontaneous young Sydneysider. He put the cap on his local reputation when, in 1826, he captured Matthew Brady, a notorious bushranger, single-handed, on the slopes of the Western Tier. And he had a way with the blacks that made him useful to Governor Arthur. For years a ferocious Black War had been going on in Tasmania, a war marked by brutal vindictiveness on the part of the whites, who were continually vowing to shoot on sight any "crows" they met. To Batman the atmosphere of terror that had been established was revolting. He petitioned the Governor to let him act as a mediator between the two races, and to a certain extent he was successful in his efforts. He made a personal approach to the most warlike of the tribes: he won their confidence, and if he could not stop the destruction of an ill-fated people he at least helped to infect the general treatment of them with a little charity. In all his encounters

with them he never fired a shot. That in itself was an achievement for the place and the time.

But, though he was given an additional 2000 acres for his work among the blacks, he could see little prospects for sheep-rearing in the wild Fingal district where the country was so rough and the native grasses so poor. His eyes were always turned towards the mainland. Camping out with a party containing the Governor (Sir George Arthur), Wedge, a surveyor, and a young Englishman, Darling (later Governor of Victoria), he outlined a plan for going by steamer to the Gulf of Carpentaria and coming down overland to Sydney, exploring new country on the way. Such an expedition would need financial backing, and Arthur promised to submit the proposals to the Secretary of State, but later admitted he had forgotten to do so. It was probably only one of the many schemes that flitted through Batman's mind. He was excited by the account Hume, his old schoolmate, gave of fertile country discovered on the overland journey across the Murray. The sealers who put in at Hobart, too, had stories of good pastoral areas around Port Phillip. Why stay wresting a living from a barren soil when there were rich territories to open up?

By 1835 he had persuaded some of his friends that it would be worth while organizing a private expedition to spy out new country. They were men like Gellibrand, the Hobart lawyer, Wedge, the surveyor who had marked out his new grant, young Henry Arthur—merchants and professional men mainly, though a few were farmers anxious to get hold of better country on the mainland. It was taken for granted that Batman should assume the active leadership. He chartered the *Rebecca*, a schooner of thirty tons, and on 25 May, with three of his own workmen and seven Sydney aboriginals, sailed out from Launceston on his voyage of exploration.

A good deal of Batman's character is revealed in his diary of that voyage. Its naïve descriptions are alive with his curiosities, his freshness of vision, his optimism.

"He was a brave, athletic, daring, resolute man," Robson,

his captain, said afterwards, "fearing nothing, neither wind nor weather."

And later when John Pascoe Fawkner sneered at Batman's accounts of the country he had covered, Robson testified to his truthfulness.

It is not worth going into the argument about the exactness of Batman's diary now: historians are agreed that it is substantially true. There is no doubt that he traversed the country around the head of Port Phillip, that he made his celebrated treaty with the blacks on the banks of the river Plenty, and that as he filled his water-casks in the Yarra near the spot spanned now by the main bridge, he was moved to his famous reflection: "This will be a good place for a village."

But the bitterness with which Fawkner, who followed him by ship a few months later, was to pursue him verbally through the years, trying to destroy his claim to be Melbourne's founder, makes a contrast between the two men interesting. Fawkner was the keeper of an hotel in Launceston, and the owner of the local paper, the *Advertiser*. A shrewd, intelligent man, with political ideas, he had made his bar the centre of the town's public life and naturally knew about most things that were happening in the country. He had heard the same stories from the sealers that Batman had, and had been tempted to try an expedition to Port Phillip or Portland Bay. While the *Rebecca* was in Launceston he had approached Batman to ask him about his plans. The two men were then friendly enough. As Batman said: "The more of us that settle there the better."

Yet Batman, Fawkner could not help reflecting, had not asked him to join his syndicate, and seemed anxious to forestall him with his discoveries. He was suspicious of the younger man and of his associates. Didn't these include Henry Arthur, a nephew of the Governor, and wouldn't that give his syndicate an advantage? Wasn't Batman, in fact, ready to "grease the fat pig"? More than merely personal feeling showed in these doubts. To an extent Fawkner was a public-spirited man, interested in the development of the

country, always ready to take the side of the poor settlers against the rich. Both his inn and his newspaper were social forums, and as a Melbourne politician, later on, he stood up robustly, throughout a long career, for democratic rights and civil liberties. But he was crabbed, distrustful, vindictive. A little man, every particle of his five feet two-and-a-quarter inches radiated a waspish energy and heat. All his life he had known how heavy the heel of authority could be and how ruthlessly it ground down those who had once slipped. His father had been transported for some slight offence, and as a boy of eleven Fawkner had accompanied him on the convict ship. Later on he had worked as a sawyer in the bush, and had been sent for three years to Sydney for helping some Portuguese prisoners to escape. It was only through sheer tenacity and strength of will that he had been able to carve out an independent career for himself as baker, bookseller, inn-keeper: but the fires kindled by past injustice burnt in his vitals, and he looked sourly on any one who sat at ease in Zion.

Batman, for instance. This young man was of the people, yet he seemed quite unconscious of the gulf between one class and another or between free men and bond. He trod the earth lightly: he was large, boisterous, ebullient, overflowing with life. And here he was talking of the great voyage of discovery he had made to the mainland and the wonderful new sheep country he had gained for himself and his friends by treaty with the blacks!

That treaty was to become a great joke among the wits of the island. They quoted the stiff, legal jargon in which Gellibrand had drawn it up before Batman left: they wrote skits about meeting wandering native kings in the streets of Hobart and having enormous territories assigned to them for a plug of tobacco, the royal signatures being duly affixed to the parchment by quills held in the naked toes. There really was something ridiculous about the documents that Gellibrand had readied up and that Batman took so seriously after he had carried out his absurd ceremonies with Jaga-Jaga and his brothers on the banks of the Plenty. How much

did these simple aboriginals know of what they were doing when they promised for themselves, their heirs, and successors to "give, grant, enfeoff, and confirm unto the said John Batman, his heirs and assigns" practically all their native hunting-grounds? But at least they got something real in exchange for their signatures: Batman was generous with his blankets, tomahawks, mirrors. Probably few natives fared better in their encounters with the whites. And Batman's titles to the land seem at least as sound as those of the ex-officers who were given grants around Parramatta and the Hawkesbury; the one came from the original owners and the other from a temporary governor who would be gone from the country in a year or two.

Yet Batman was not allowed to reap much benefit from the deal. He had left a party in occupation at Port Phillip, enjoining them to warn off all trespassers, and had returned to Launceston in June. At the end of July Fawkner set off in the *Enterprise*, and with a small group of friends established himself in a camp on the Yarra at the present site of Melbourne. Batman's party had tried to head them off when they first entered the bay, but they had laughed at the solitary white man and his four Sydney aboriginals. The question of legal right remained to be settled. Meanwhile they were intent on digging in and securing occupation in fact.

The history of the next few years is one of peaceful but unauthorized settlement, Batman and his friends gradually realizing that their treaty would not hold water, yet hoping in some way to get priority when the lands were legally divided. People were flowing into the new colony from Tasmania, putting up sod huts and awaiting events. Batman brought his family over with their governess, and began to farm an area on the present site of Spencer Street station. He had been to Sydney where he excited great interest among his old friends at Parramatta by his stories of rich pastures around Port Phillip, with lands suitable for wheat. He still had expectations that something would come of the various petitions Gellibrand was sending to Downing Street, pointing out what the syndicate had already done and what it intended

to do. But as the little settlement grew, formed a village council, organized race-meetings and social gatherings, and began thinking of regular forms of government, the vision of being a benevolent patriarch in a virgin territory faded from Batman's mind. He was a disappointed man: his rival, Fawkner, was better suited to small politics: he began to suffer in his health.

Meanwhile he lived on friendly terms with Fawkner, resenting less and less his rival's claim to be founder of the settlement: and the peace was only broken when there was some argument about broken fences or Henry Batman sooled his dog on one of Fawkner's marauding calves.

When the town of Melbourne was first surveyed and the prices given for allotments at the first land sales alarmed him with fears that he would lose his home, since he could not bid any great amount for it, Batman drew up a petition to the Colonial Secretary urging that he should be given a free grant of twenty acres, "on which he had built and cultivated, and which was not in the township now laid out." The petition was rejected, but Batman was permitted to continue his occupation until further notice, if he abstained from erecting any further buildings or enclosures.

A year later, in the grip of a protracted illness, he petitioned again, pointing out that he had spent at least £1500 on improvements, that he was the first occupant of the territory, the man through whom friendly intercourse had been established with the natives: and asking that he should be allowed to purchase his own land, not at the competitive sales, but directly. It was some time before the petition filtered through all the clogged channels, but the final answer was adverse. And before it came Batman had died. His land was cut up and sold to the highest bidders, but Sir George Gipps advised the Home Office, that "as an indulgence, he had consented to allow the materials of the houses and everything else that is movable to be taken away for the benefit of Mr Batman's family."

It was not the fate of this exuberant son of the soil to leave anything to "his heirs and assigns." If he had a vision, when

dealing with Jaga-Jaga and his friends, of founding a great family it was thwarted. Such property as he left went, through a defective will, to strangers. His only son was drowned in the Yarra. His daughters married and passed into the anonymous mass.

Thirty years after his death, Fawkner, an old mumbling man, one who had tasted wealth and political power, but still brooded on past humiliations, could say triumphantly, as he recalled the early days of Melbourne:

"Where are the Batmans now? All vanished off the face of the earth."

THE EMANCIPIST

William Charles Wentworth

THE assurance that a great career lay ahead of him filled young Wentworth with confidence when he left for England in 1816 to study for the Bar. He was twenty-three years old and already had made something of a reputation in the colony. With Blaxland and Lawson he had penetrated the passes of the Blue Mountains; he had been appointed Acting Provost-Marshal; he was established as a landowner by a grant of country on the Nepean. Socially he had made his mark in Sydney society. Macquarie thought well of him: and Macquarie had a chance to see a good deal of him when young Wentworth organized the different receptions that were given him on his return from Tasmania. There was a force and adaptability about Wentworth that impressed people. Who could doubt the future of this versatile young man who showed to equal advantage when riding his father's horse in the races at Hyde Park or taking the chair at a public meeting? He was on good terms with the Macarthurs at Parramatta. He even had hopes of marrying Elizabeth Macarthur, and so creating a union of powerful interests that would ensure, as he wrote to his father, "the future respectability and grandeur of our family."

There was some desire in D'Arcy Wentworth's mind that his son should obtain a commission in the Guards, particularly since Edward Macarthur had entered the Army and led his company in Spain. But young Wentworth's ambitions were not military. For one thing his hardships on the Blue Mountains expedition had affected his lungs: it was necessary that he should take care of himself for awhile. Then he definitely disliked the military caste. In Sydney he sided with

Macquarie against the "exclusives"—that is, the officers who were trying to set an exclusive standard for society: he had written an anonymous lampoon on Colonel Molle (a "pipe," as such things were called), that had enraged Molle and made him cast about furiously for his hidden enemy. Wentworth's feeling against the military went deep: he resented their continual attempts in Sydney to assert their power.

But his objection to a military career was mainly due to the knowledge that it would lead him away from his native country, away into what was, for him, an alien world. He had a conception of himself as a patriot. Already he had cast himself for the role of Australia's first citizen. When he wrote to Lord Fitzwilliam, his father's patron, he was quick to state that in seeking admission to the English Bar it was by no means his intention to abandon the country that had given him birth.

"I am sensible to the claims it has upon me—claims which, in its present despised and indigent situation, I should blush even to be supposed to be capable of neglecting. In withdrawing myself, therefore, for a time from that country, I am actuated by a desire of better qualifying myself for the performance of those duties that birth has imposed . . ."

His patriotism was sincere. Probably he did feel that his country had a strong claim on him: probably he had been filled with real emotion when he stood on the last peaks of the Blue Mountains looking out over the unknown plains that would provide a home for a new race. But his cast of mind was rhetorical: he was moved by grandiose words and concepts rather than by simple, inner feelings. And what was there in the Australia of 1817 to stir a sense of loyalty or pride? The familiar creeks and mountains which they had known in boyhood might appeal intimately to men like Hume or Batman, but he was not a countryman: he was urban and political. The Australia that claimed his allegiance was one he himself intended to create. He had already thought about its constitution: it would have free institutions on the British model, and it would be governed by a few aristocratic families, who were secured in their position by large holdings of land.

His own father was already one of the largest landowners in the country, and if he were allied by marriage with the Macarthurs the foundations of power would be well laid.

"I know," he wrote to his father, "that a union of this nature between two families connected by such ancient bonds of friendship and having both in view objects of a similar description—the formation of permanent and respectable establishments in the colony—would not fail to secure your approbation, even without reference to that predilection and regard which I know you feel for the object of my affection."

It is hard to discover what the object of Wentworth's affection, Miss Macarthur, thought about the union. Her father, however, regarded it with favour, at least for the time being. John Macarthur was just then in exile, and had been for some years. He could not return to Sydney while Macquarie still held instructions to arrest him and bring him before the Supreme Court for trial: and after lobbying in Westminster, seeing influential people, pulling this string and that, he had gone to Switzerland and France with his sons, there to study vine-growing and lick his many wounds. He was in a continual state of worry and unrest. Such scanty news of events at home: so little to be learnt of how his prize flocks at Parramatta were progressing! He welcomed young Wentworth cordially, and gave him introductions that might prove useful, including one to the head of Exeter College.

For Wentworth, although never wavering in his intention to carve out his career at home, was alive to the advantage of securing "powerful connections" in England. He already had Lord Fitzwilliam for a patron: he exerted himself to make other friends in high places. To Lord Bathurst he applied for the position of Vendue Master at Sydney; as much, probably, with the idea of making himself known, as with the hope of getting the job. For he had already enrolled at the Inner Temple and was settling down to the five years' spell of work that would gain him admission to the English Bar. Meanwhile he was troubled about money, for his father although well-supplied with frozen assets in Sydney, was having his bills protested in London. It seemed sometimes to

the younger man that he might have to go back to an official post in Sydney before he had really fitted himself for his career.

He made the most of his time. He haunted the House of Commons: he had long talks with John Macarthur about the future of New South Wales: he went to live in Paris for a while to enlarge his knowledge of the world. But about this time he received a blow that altered his idea of his own status, even his general outlook. In reading a public letter by the Hon. H. G. Bennet to Lord Sidmouth, he was shocked by a statement that D'Arcy Wentworth, his father, had been transported as a convict. This was not literally true: but in rushing to defend his father young Wentworth discovered facts that were even more disturbing. His mother had been a convict! He himself was probably illegitimate! And if his father had not been transported he had, at any rate, been forced to leave England because, as a medical student, he had been arrested on a charge of robbery under arms.

What wonder if Wentworth brooded over the idea that the world "was on the eve of some great general revolution"! His own private world was shaken to its roots: he could no longer hope to be one of the leaders of an aristocratic and exclusive society. It would even be hard to meet the arrogant officers of Sydney on level terms. He read Shelley and Byron: he remodelled some of his ideas about the part ex-convicts should play in the new Australian society. When he sketched a political constitution for New South Wales in the book he was writing (a book whose tendency Macarthur referred to afterwards as "highly mischievous") he made provisions for emancipists being allowed the right to vote.

His quarrel with the Macarthurs, which came about at the time, was probably a result of his new state of mind. He conceived a violent dislike for John Macarthur junior, who had been his close friend. This young upstart, with his nose for political intrigue and his talent for becoming acquainted with people who would be of use to him, was a chip of the old block! He had spent many years in getting himself educated, but he knew more about the lobbies of Westminster

than about the classics! When, in 1823, Wentworth having entered Peterhouse College to keep a few terms, completed a poem for the Chancellor's gold medal, it was with the definite intention of scoring off young Macarthur. If it gained the prize, he wrote to his father, "I shall have distinguished myself here in a month, which John Macarthur could not contrive to do during the fourteen years he was resident here."

The poem, "Australasia," did not gain the prize, but it was one of two chosen from a field of eighteen. It was typical of Wentworth's vigour, his rhetoric, his strength. Also of his fundamental lack of humour. Could any but a humourless man, even under the compulsion of an eighteenth-century style, have written of the last of a crowd of castaways:

"And one, sad sepulchre of all the rest."

But humour, as someone has said, may prove a handicap rather than an asset to a man of action.

Wentworth came back to Sydney in 1824, fully resolved to destroy the power of the exclusive set that aimed at running the country. He was confident in his own abilities. His discovery about his father had not filled him with a sense of inferiority: instead it had opened sources of passion. In spite of his clumsy gait, the slight cast in his eye, he was an impressive figure, and knew it. He had matured: there was a force in his quick, abrupt speech, in the carriage of his leonine head. And his English experience had given him assurance. He had felt quite equal to addressing the House of Commons on the new bill it was preparing to impose a constitutional settlement on the colony. Unfortunately the chance had been missed, but there remained the fight for constitutional freedom in New South Wales itself. He determined to gain power by putting himself at the head of the emancipists who were struggling to achieve legal and political freedom.

The quickest way was through journalism. In collaboration with Wardell, a legal friend who had come out with

him, he established the *Australian*, taking his right for granted, although there had been no newspaper before except the official and censored *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*. Wentworth's policy was gradually to organize and control a public opinion in support of free institutions. The emancipists were intent on having their legal disabilities abolished, but were apathetic about political rights. Wentworth aimed at impressing upon them the need for not merely representative but responsible government. To do this he had first to concentrate on the things that were hot in their minds—judicial reform, trial by jury, the suppression of all the indignities the exclusives tried to put upon them.

The birth of the *Australian* was an exciting incident in the life of Sydney. It was conducted with great ability, and it attracted the new growing public at which its articles were aimed. Wentworth did not attack the Government directly, for Sir Thomas Brisbane, the then Governor, was sympathetic to him, or at any rate too conscious of his power to be other than tolerant of his ideas. Brisbane was an easy-going man, interested in astronomy, and anxious to finish his term of service without conflict. But when Sir Ralph Darling was appointed, Wentworth began to gird up his loins for a campaign against the whole autocratic system.

Darling was an officious, opinionated man, the conventional type of military governor. He was determined to follow in the tradition of Macquarie, but he had little of Macquarie's tact or broad, human sympathies. Then it was too late for a governor to play the autocrat: New South Wales had altered greatly since the impulsive Highlander's day. Free settlers had been coming in, and people were growing sensitive about their civil rights and liberties. There was no immediate trouble, for Darling, like Brisbane, was acutely aware of the *Australian's* influence. He endeavoured to conciliate Wentworth, who had used the ceremonies connected with his arrival and Brisbane's departure to work up public demonstrations for responsible government. He even played with the idea of getting Wentworth on his side by appointing him as one of the civilian members of the new Executive Council. Went-

worth, however, was too conscious of his own power to be caught so easily. It might be pleasant to accept the recognition, the assured status, that were offered him: but he had greater ambitions. Besides matters of principle were at stake. He could not cease his war against the exclusives: he could not become part of a system he loathed. He decided to keep his independence and infuse more vigour into his attack.

In 1826 there was an incident that aroused great public feeling. Two soldiers, Sudds and Thompson, had deliberately committed theft with the idea of getting free from the Army. Darling, the militarist, felt that this was an open insult to the King's uniform: he had the two offenders sentenced to hard labour on the roads. Loaded with chains, they were drummed out of the regiment, and their treatment was so brutal that one of them, Sudds, died.

At once there was an outburst of popular indignation, with Wentworth as its most audible voice. He called Darling a murderer: he threatened to have the matter brought up in the British House of Commons, and even to impeach him. On the platform at public meetings he was vigorous and unrestrained, a demagogue for the first time in his life. To Darling he was the very image of the mass in revolt. At first the Governor referred to Wentworth superciliously as a "vulgar ill-bred fellow," then as a republican trying to throw off the British yoke. He made an attempt to suppress the *Australian*, but Forbes, the Chief Justice, emasculated his bills. He brought libel actions in the civil courts and won them without any other effect than the damage of his own prestige. Meanwhile Wentworth was continuing the agitation, and making out his articles of impeachment.

When Darling was ultimately recalled in 1831, the occasion was one of public rejoicing. Boats flitted about the harbour covered with flags, whistles blew, people paraded the waterfront: and, to cap all, Wentworth announced that he was throwing his house and grounds at Vaucluse open for a great barbecue. A bullock, covered with ribbons, was shown in the streets: it was one of the beasts to be roasted whole over the

open fires. And when the appointed night came, nearly all Sydney trooped out to the harbourside home of its champion.

Darling's recall was regarded as a personal triumph for Wentworth, who was the man of the hour, the people's hero. But perhaps as he stood watching the merrymaking crowds, listening to their cheers of approbation, Wentworth was filled with a little compunction. He was not a republican, as Darling had suggested: he was not even a democrat. At heart he was really an old-time Whig and distrusted the mass. He had been driven into this demagogy by his hatred of the exclusives, and of the autocratic system that supported their social power. He had, in fact, let himself go too far. And where might the enthusiasm of the people take him? Now that free settlers were coming in there was a growing demand for the abolition of convictism, and could he assent to that? He did not wish to see transportation cease. His mind was on the land and on his own position as landowner: how except through the cheap labour of convicts could the great estates be run? He was determined to work for responsible government and free institutions, but they must be based on property, not on any idea of universal rights.

The Australian Patriotic Association, which he founded in 1835, incorporated his ideas at the time. It was organized to carry on the old battle of the emancipists for legal rights and for constitutional government, but Wentworth was alert in seeing that its management should be in the hands of men who held property. The exclusives were still a social force. They supported the autocratic system in the belief that it alone could secure them in their power. Wentworth, they regarded as an agitator, a dangerous and subversive person who was trying to open the gates to a destructive, democratic tide. John Macarthur had died, but in James, his second son, the exclusives had another leader; not quite as able as the old man, perhaps, but just as active. When the Australian Patriotic Association petitioned for an elected legislature and trial by jury, James was sent to London to assure the authorities that these things were not wanted except by a handful of troublesome people—people without standing in the country.

Yet time and inevitable developments were whittling down the questions at issue between the two groups. It had always been, to some extent, a struggle between social cliques rather than economic classes, and now its essential nature was becoming more exposed. Many of the emancipists held land: their material interests were identical with those of the exclusives. Wentworth himself had retired from the *Australian* and given up his practice at the Bar, devoting himself entirely to developing his pastoral properties. Meanwhile the free settlers who had been coming in steadily since 1831 were interested in getting access to the land, and in abolishing the convict system that, through holding large supplies of labour in reserve, kept down its price. Every day the old political division was becoming less real.

There was no change in Wentworth's ideas during these years, but there was considerable change in the world around him, and a leakage of the passion that had been his motive force. He was a rich man; wealth had come to him through his father and through his earnings at the Bar. He owned a great amount of land. And, in spite of his speeches on the hustings, in spite of his invective and his violence, his social status had become more secure. There was a native power in him that had made itself felt. He was accepted as one of the leading figures in the life of the country, and there was no house sufficiently exclusive to shut its doors against him, no club likely to blackball him because of his origins. The sense of hurt, which for so long had been a stimulus to him, was entirely dulled.

"His day is gone by," said his old paper, "his opinion is worth nothing. He stands alone, and is entirely disregarded. Certainly he first taught the natives of this colony what liberty was, but he has betrayed them since and they have withdrawn their confidence from him."

It was an exaggeration, of course. Wentworth stood in much the same place as he had always stood, but the tide of ideas and events was moving past him. The Australian Patriotic Association, for instance, which had seemed such a revolutionary body to the exclusives when it started, was by

1840 upholding the convict-system, the old land-monopolies, and the attempts of the pastoralists to get coolies from India. Everything in fact that the radicals hated! For by now there was a radical movement in Sydney, one bred from economic issues and supported by young men born in the country or by immigrants like Henry Parkes, an ivory-turner of George Street, who spent his days making billiard-balls and his evenings talking Chartism. These people knew nothing of Wentworth, the agitator. To them there was no strangeness or irony in the sight of him standing on the same platform as James Macarthur defending transportation and the old conditions of holding land.

Wentworth had not changed perceptibly, but the exclusives had moved towards him. They now saw no danger in responsible government so long as voting was based on a property qualification and essential power given into their hands. They were dissatisfied with the driblets of representation accorded them by successive bills. The Governor still controlled appointments to the Executive: he guided the administration of Crown Lands; a large part of the growing revenue was under his direction. It was a system ill-suited to the quick exploitation of the resources of the country. Realizing this they opposed even the Constitution Act of 1842, which provided for a Legislative Council consisting of thirty-six members, twelve of whom were nominated by the Crown and twenty-four elected on a property qualification.

As the leader of the elected part of the House Wentworth devoted himself to the task of showing that nothing less than responsible government was acceptable or even practical. This was a role that called out all his qualities, his political instinct, his debating power, his knowledge of constitutional law. Some of his early passion and force came back to him. He adopted an aggressive attitude. He obstructed Gipps, the Governor, in all sorts of minor ways. He framed resolutions taking exception to his language and accusing him of breach of privilege. In all this he was conscious of having the country behind him, for the mass of the people as well as the exclu-

sives felt that they had a right to full control over their own affairs. Wentworth had become a national figure again.

Those ten years, between 1843 and 1853, were the most fruitful period of his life. There was no one who understood Parliamentary institutions as he did, for he had made them his life-study, and during his early years in London he had assiduously frequented the House of Commons. He knew every move of the political game, when to be astute and when to be forceful. Consequently, even when his popularity waned, there was no one who really disputed his leadership. He had about him the dignity of an elder statesman. There were men of ability in the public life of the day—men like Robert Lowe who afterwards made something of a reputation in the British House of Commons—but they could not stand up to him in debate. He had set out in the beginning to achieve responsible government for New South Wales and when the vague resistance of Downing Street to the idea was broken down and a Constitution Bill was finally passed by the New South Wales Parliament in 1853 it was largely Wentworth's handiwork.

Largely, though not entirely so. One of his most cherished notions was eliminated by public ridicule and by the vote of his fellow-members. He had a strong feeling that final political control should rest in the hands of the landed class—the cultured and aristocratic class, he liked to believe, but at any rate his own class, the people who were already rooted. Why not have a revising-chamber of hereditary peers that would act as a permanent check on public opinion? There were the social as well as the material interests of the country to be guarded, he argued: and the creation of a local nobility would form a strong inducement to "respectable families" to remain, and would encourage the upper classes of other countries to emigrate. But the proposal aroused the native humour of the country. There were quips about the Duke of Vaucluse and the Earl of Camden. Wentworth was forced to fall back, for his check on public opinion, on a nominated second House.

The other alterations to his Bill were made in Great Britain,

and one at least of them was more serious. Wentworth had always claimed that a distinction should be drawn between matters of local and imperial concern: that in local matters a governor should act on the advice of his ministers, and that his powers should be statutorily defined. But this clause was regarded as limiting the prerogatives of the Crown and it was deleted from the Bill by the House of Commons: the undefined powers of the Governor remained, to be a source of trouble in political crises to this day. In the main, though, it is the constitution Wentworth hammered out that still survives.

This is his achievement, and it gives him a claim to be regarded as a great historical figure. Early in life he had discovered his own purpose and ambition, and he worked towards it with persistence and strength. It is force of character that makes him stand out from the men of his day. In a changing period, when social life was fluid and unstable, and the opinions of others wavered according to the circumstances of the moment, he remained, like a tough old iron-bark, rooted by his fixed ways and deeply-considered ideas. His name had become a legend before he died in 1873, and when he was brought home from England to be buried at Vaucluse it was felt that a great patriot and a great statesman had passed.

Yet it is time to consider the legend and Wentworth's contribution to our national life. In many respects his ideas and activity ran counter to its true development, even to the feeling of his day. He based his claims for responsible government on the sovereign rights of the people, but he was not a democrat: as Parkes said, it was doubtful whether "the people," a phrase so often on his lips, "ever in his mind included the masses of his fellow-men." Indeed it is more than doubtful: it certainly did not. He lost no opportunity of sneering at the political wisdom of the masses, the "mere population" that had less right to a say in public affairs than the standing interests of the country had. He saw himself as a bulwark against the rising democratic tide. Even when he was deeply occupied with constitutional matters he never lost sight of the necessity of extending his own holdings of land,

and securing his pastoral rights by law. He aimed at being the leader of a tight little oligarchy that would exercise power in the country and pass its privileges on to its sons. At times he was rapacious and moved by the spirit of the old filibusters. There was the incident in 1840, when he got hold of some Maori chiefs in Sydney and (behind the back of Gipps, who was negotiating with them) persuaded them to make over ten million acres of land to him and his associates for trifling annuities. It was a racket that made Batman's deal with the natives of Port Phillip seem innocent, but when the dishonesty of it was pointed out to him Wentworth only laughed and said robustly:

"I am an admirer of Raleigh and Strafford. This is the sort of thing they would do."

Even his patriotism can hardly be accepted at face-value. John Dunmore Lang was not merely moved by malice when he spoke of it as "equivocal." Undoubtedly Wentworth was sincere in his repeated assertions that love of country was the ruling passion of his life, but it was a country that must reflect his image and that of his class. He could not merge himself in it unconditionally, make himself bone of its bone. There were other countries in which a man who had money could enjoy a pleasant old age.

"Who would stay here if they could avoid it?" he once asked. "Who, with ample means, would ever return, if once he left these shores, or even identify himself with the soil, so long as selfishness, ignorance, and democracy hold sway?"

It suggests that "a stake in the country" is not such a good guarantee for patriotic responsibility as he contended: a stake is an easy thing to shift.

Yet Wentworth has to be considered against the background of his day. There must have been grounds for the opinion of his contemporaries that he was a great man, for it is expressed by those who opposed as well as those who supported him. His vitality, independence, courage, helped to stimulate those qualities in others, to awaken a national consciousness; and so (in the same way as his constitution was turned to democratic ends) to create a society different from the one he had planned.

THE EXPLORER

Charles Sturt

THE name of Sturt shines brightly in the history of Australian settlement. Rolf Boldrewood, in his *Melbourne Memories*, speaks of the hero-worship with which as a youth he surrounded Evelyn Sturt, the explorer's brother. This dashing young squatter, one of the "Mount Gambier mob," as it was called in those days, was Boldrewood's ideal of the perfect knight: handsome, chivalrous, humane, he had a distinction in his bearing, but there was no aloofness about him. He was full of exuberant life, quick to spring to any one's aid, saving one man from drowning and sucking the poison from another's leg when he was bitten by a snake. A mixture of the picturesque aristocrat and the democratic bushman, a man at home in any company, one who had driven his own bullocks and explored new country.

Charles Sturt was of the same type, but quieter, more reflective, ready to spend himself, but only for ends he considered worth while. In 1827 he had come to Sydney as a captain in the Thirty-ninth, hating, he confessed afterwards, the idea of military duty in a convict settlement, and feeling he was doomed to a term of dreary exile. He was astonished by what he found. The country, the climate, the general flow of life delighted him. These flourishing corn-fields and orchards, these beautiful bays! Nothing he had heard or read of New South Wales had prepared him for such agreeable surroundings, and perhaps his very surprise inclined him to idealize them slightly. In a little while he was immersed in the problems of the country, particularly its geographic problems. He had a natural scientific bent, and though his

training had been a military one—he had fought against the French in Spain—the cast of his mind was not military.

"I don't know how it is," he wrote to his brother once, "I have taken a disrelish for war . . ."

Indeed, even to his close friends, he rarely talked about his experiences in the Peninsula or in those skirmishes with the invading American Army in Canada.

At that time the minds of most people not directly concerned with trade were occupied with speculations about the interior of the continent. There were practical reasons for wishing to open up new country; for the flocks of sheep were increasing, and a drought had impoverished the country near the coast. But what lay inland? Did the westward-flowing rivers run into a great enclosed sea? Native tradition said they did, and certainly no large estuary had been found on the explored coast. In 1817 Oxley had tried to solve the problem, but he had been held up by the confusing marshes of the Lachlan: it was time for a new expedition.

Yet there was some criticism when Governor Darling accepted Sturt's offer to lead it: other more experienced men were available—Mitchell, Cunningham, Hume. And Sturt had, apparently, little to recommend him, apart from his character.

"What qualifications has the Captain, either as a scientific or a practical traveller," asked Mitchell sourly, "to justify this appointment?"

History has answered the question emphatically, but history's answers are always belated. It was natural that the two newspapers and the overlooked officials should attribute the military Darling's choice to his preference for a serving soldier. Mitchell himself had been a soldier, but his term of service was long past and he was then acting as Surveyor-General. And Hume, of course, was merely a native-born civilian. It is typical of Hume, this great-hearted bushman, that, although he had in the Port Phillip trip a considerable achievement to his credit, he let no personal pride debar him from accompanying Sturt.

"As second to Sturt," he said afterward, "I found enough of

honour: and over and above the honour I secured a friendship the memory of which is still treasured by me."

It was certainly lucky for Sturt that he had the young bushman with him on the trip. Hume not only knew something of the natives' language and customs, but he respected them and could show his chief how to make friendly approaches. More than once when they came upon parties of warlike natives it was Hume's coolness and experience that enabled them to get off without a conflict. Besides his bushcraft was in itself a great asset. Although Sturt had already made short journeys around Sydney he knew little of the country: he recognized Hume's worth and was teachable, modest and unassuming. Together they traced the Bogan, Macquarie and Castlereagh through their exasperating marshes and found the outlet of all these streams in a great river flowing south, which Sturt named the Darling.

A successful trip, but for Sturt only the beginning of his lifework. He had not come upon the inland sea, but he had discovered the main channel of the colony's western watershed. And incidentally he had answered his critics and aroused among Sydney people an even keener interest in exploration. It now remained to determine the further course of the Darling, and to find out where it reached the sea. He had struck the river near some brine-springs and had found it too salt to drink: without the certainty of fresh water there would be great risks in following it down. A better course, he argued, would be to move south-west along the Murrumbidgee and, if that stream failed, to push across country to the Darling, reaching a point considerably farther south than the one previously struck. By the end of September 1829 he was authorized to prepare such an expedition.

And so began a journey which is the most fascinating in our records of exploration, a journey rich with incident and drama, heroic in its display of character and courage by the men who accomplished it. There were to be eight in the party. Hume could not go, since he was busy harvesting on his farm: in his place went MacLeay, a lad of twenty, a

neighbour of the Macarthurs at Parramatta. Of the six others who formed the famous boat's crew, Harris, Hopkinson and Fraser were soldiers who had been on the Macquarie expedition; the other three were convicts—Clayton, Mulholland and Macnamee. But it is unlikely that these convicts were ever reminded of their status. Before long they were a band of brothers. No one man could claim credit for creating this spirit of comradeship, but it would not have been possible among such a mixed crowd except for some rare quality in Sturt—this tall, spare, blue-eyed young leader who put complete trust in those around him and found, miraculously, that it worked.

The party, with drays and a small flock of sheep, started buoyantly out towards the Murrumbidgee, cheered on by hospitable settlers, and attracted by the wild and romantic scenery of the upper reaches, which had been denounced as of "the very worst description." But before long they found the river running between reedy banks and an expanse of dark plains stretching westward. An old native spoke of another river flowing to the southward of west, beside which the Murrumbidgee was a creek. This, Sturt reasoned, must be the river Hume and Hovell's party had crossed, the river they called the Hume. He looked forward to finding it join the Murrumbidgee to form a great westward-flowing river, but meanwhile the ground ahead of him was reedy and rotten, and progress difficult. He determined to send back his drays and cattle and build a couple of boats—a large whaleboat and a small skiff.

"Where I shall wander to God only knows," he wrote to Hume, "I have little doubt, however, that I shall ultimately make the coast."

And so the real journey began, the eight men launching their frail boats, and heading downwards with the current into a world completely unknown. At first navigation was difficult. Floodwaters had brought down uprooted trees which jammed in the narrow channels; there were old snags just below the surface that might easily rip a boat from stem to stern. But before a week was out they had shot from their

rapid, difficult stream into a broad, winding river, and Sturt knew that his decision to take to the boats was justified. There must be some outlet for this great body of water, and he had chosen the only practical way of reaching it.

That journey down the Murray toward the sea had something idyllic about it. The current of the river carried them on without much effort: they shot birds and caught fish to replenish their stores; there was always the exciting prospect of discoveries ahead. Even their encounters with the natives were only temporarily disturbing. There were tense moments when jabbering groups appeared on the cliffs above them and threatened to attack: but Sturt had learnt from Hume that the display of a green branch would be taken as a sign of friendship. His attitude towards the natives was sympathetic, but cautious and unsentimental. He had no romantic feeling about them as unspoiled children of the wild: he knew that they were impulsive and incalculable, moved by tides of feeling he could never hope to understand: but it was a matter of personal honour with him to avoid using firearms against them, except as a last, desperate resource. He was satisfied to make them small gifts and move out of their way as quickly as possible. There was too much at stake for him to expose his party to the risk of sudden unlooked-for attack.

But one encounter is worth recording: it occurred near the junction of the Murray and the Darling. The explorers had camped with a group of natives a couple of nights before, and MacLeay, in particular, had made friends with them, joining in their corroboree. Evidently the blacks believed that the young fellow was a member of the tribe, killed with a spear some time before and now returned from the dead: they called him Rundi and asked to be shown the wound in his side. Next day four of the natives led by a big, powerful fellow accompanied the party down-stream, running ahead of the boats and finally crossing the river and disappearing. What was in their minds, Sturt wondered? The question was answered when, many miles down, the boat-crew met a larger and more formidable tribe awaiting them in battle-array on a sandspit that stretched two-thirds of the way across

the river. There seemed little chance of passing them without a fight, and spears were already being raised, when the friendly four came racing along the bank, the big fellow leaping from a high cliff into the water in his anxiety to prevent the white men from being attacked. Either his authority or his anger had power. Spears were lowered and the natives even gathered to help Sturt and his party when, astonished at the sudden intervention, they let the boat drift and grounded on the sandbank.

Sturt's passage down the Murray was accomplished safely, but when the secret of Lake Alexandrina and the bar-bound estuary had been revealed, there remained the journey back, a formidable matter. Darling had promised to send a ship around to St Vincent Gulf to meet them, but to cross the ranges on the chance of finding one there was impossible. Even to wait was dangerous: their supplies were running out. There was nothing for it but to begin the long journey upstream, the current against them and no hope of using the sail that had given them some assistance coming down. Nearly two thousand miles of sheer slogging at the oars, with rations that had fallen to less than a pound of flour a day!

That journey can fittingly be compared with Bligh's enforced one to Timor thirty years before. There were no rough seas to contend with, but there were rapids, continual labour at the oars, waning strength, ceaseless danger of attack from the banks. For they were at the mercy of the blacks now, moving at a snail's pace upstream. A false movement, the breaking of a fishing-net stretched across the river, might lead to their annihilation; and there was the constant fear of floods. Week after week they rowed on with aching backs and blistered hands, but there was no murmur from the men.

"When they thought me asleep," says Sturt in his journal, "I would hear them in their tent complain of severe pains and exhaustion. 'I must tell the Captain to-morrow,' one of them would say, 'that I can pull no more.' To-morrow came; and stubbornly they pulled on."

One night they were awakened by a shot. They sprang up and found that Harris, the sentry, had fired at two natives

who were creeping in on him. But there was no blood-shed. Harris confessed that he had fired between the two natives because he knew that Sturt would regret it if he hit his man.

"How noble do the characters of Captain Sturt and his party appear!" exclaims Sir Charles Napier.

And Henry Kingsley wondered what Clayton, the fat carpenter, could possibly have done to condemn him to the life of a convict.

But one can only believe that contact with Sturt brought out the essential gallantry in those around him. Years after the Murray journey, when he was farming his own land at Varroville, he was stuck up one night by three bushrangers. When he protested, the man covering him with his gun recognized his voice and shouted to his mates:

"Stand back, boys. It's Captain Sturt, and we don't rob him."

And O'Donaghue, another notorious outlaw of the time, swore that whatever came he would never raise his gun against Sturt: though he dared Sturt, as magistrate, to do his worst against him.

For Sturt, the Murray adventure successfully over, had settled down to a life on the land, first at Mittagong and then at Varroville. He had been given a grant of 5000 acres, and looked forward to a peaceful life, rearing sheep and making experiments in horticulture. He wrote to friends in different parts of the world for seeds of all kinds: he aimed at creating a Tuscan villa, growing his own fruits, laying down his own wines. By day he worked on his land, planting out orange-trees and making dams to store water, and in the evenings he read or drew, completing a series of valuable bird-studies that unfortunately were afterwards lost.

From this quiet life he was drawn in 1838 by another call to action. The township of Adelaide had been planted in the rich country west of Alexandrina, about which he had written so glowingly in his journal, but the future of the new colony was uncertain. Settlers had come thronging in before a regular food-supply was secured, and now they were threatened with famine. In this crisis some Sydney entre-

preneurs had conceived the idea of driving stock across country to Adelaide, and they asked Sturt to conduct the first party. He hesitated at first, but it occurred to him that though the lower part of the Murray was now known and even settled, the upper part, called the Hume, was still unexplored.

"I therefore determined to make my private interests subservient to geographical research by completing, on my way to Adelaide, the survey of the Hume, and by noting the kind of country through which it might run."

He could not hope that it would prove as rich in new experience as his first expedition to the sea: there was no Great Unknown to be revealed at the end of it. It was sober geographical work, the charting of country that might soon be opened for settlement. His great worry was the safety of his cattle. The blacks waylaid them as they floundered through the red-gum swamps of the Upper Murray and picked off any lagging beasts. There was continual trouble about cows that slipped back for their calves. Delays, and anxiety about food-supplies! Sturt himself was concerned about his wife whom he had been forced to leave alone with the problem of running Varroville. He confessed afterwards that it was the most harassing of all his journeys.

At Adelaide he was surprised by the enthusiasm with which he was received by all classes, but new responsibilities were thrust upon him. The town was advancing slowly because residents could not be convinced that the site fixed on was final, and Sturt was asked to report on the advantages of a removal to Encounter Bay, near the mouth of the Murray. Afterwards the position of Surveyor-General was offered to him. It meant breaking up his home in New South Wales, where he had spent happy years, but he had never been able to refuse the call of public service. Besides the country around Adelaide had enchanted him since he had first seen it. Those beautiful valleys between Mount Lofty and the Murray, grassed like English fields and filled with flowers! Those glimpses of the sea between folds of hills! He was enthusiastic about the prospects of the new settlement, of which he could regard himself as, in part, the founder.

So the next few years of his life were devoted largely to civil work. He applied himself to it disinterestedly, in spite of official discouragement. His original appointment was ignored by the Colonial Office, and he had to take over the duties of Assistant-Commissioner for Lands, with a seat on the Council: but he did not resent his displacement by Frome, and together with his new chief devoted himself to surveying the land and getting it settled. There were many disappointments in store for him. His hopes of discovering fertile country in the northern interior were soon dashed, and the original settlers of Adelaide (many of them moneyed people attracted by Wakefield's original scheme) were more interested in speculating in land than in developing it. Consequently those who had nothing to depend on but their labour were dribbling away to Sydney and Melbourne. It seemed that the young colony would prove a failure unless it could quickly increase its food-supplies, and Sturt assiduously set about the task of encouraging stock-breeding and agriculture. He eagerly introduced new plants and fruits. He caused searching inquiries to be made into the alarming increase of scab among sheep and practically stamped it out. He tried to arouse interest in rural life by arranging cattle-shows and ploughing-matches. And he was foremost in a movement to stimulate invention by offering prizes for agricultural improvements. As a direct result of this movement many patents for labour-saving devices were taken out, and Ridley produced his stripper, which greatly reduced the cost of wheat-production.

Immersed in this quiet, creative work, happy in his family life at his new home, The Grange, Sturt was moderately content.

"The place," he wrote, "is better than England with all its wealth and politics."

But he could not put the problems of the unexplored interior from his mind. Other men were making their discoveries—Eyre and Frome near at hand, and his old rival Mitchell, in the back country of New South Wales. Sturt had the belief that if the backing were provided for him he

could, in two years, survey the whole continent. A less ambitious desire was to see what lay behind the great salt-lakes to the north, Eyre and Torrens, which definitely blocked the outward growth of settlement. He put a gentle and unremitting pressure on the authorities to allow him to make one more expedition, and at last he was successful, setting forth in August 1844 in an attempt to reach the heart of the continent.

The story of that journey is one of hardship, strain, disillusionment. The party turned eastward to avoid the salt-lakes, but as soon as they left the known country around the Darling they struck sand-hills, gibber plains, stretches of arid desert. It was a drought year, and even the birds had left the shrunken waterholes. Sturt and his party had the feeling of entering a desolation from which all life had gone. Day after day a fierce heat that burnt the eyeballs poured down upon them, as they halted by scummy soaks to refresh their horses or made forced marches over the next stretch of waterless country. Over a year was spent in reaching a point one hundred and fifty miles south of the centre, and from there Sturt was forced to turn back. He had the consolation, as half-blind, suffering from scurvy, he made his way south towards Adelaide, that he had done something towards solving a geographical problem: but afterwards came the feeling of having failed to justify himself.

"When I determined on turning homewards," he wrote, "with mind depressed and strength weakened, it appeared to me that I had done all that man could do. Now, under the influence of restored health, I feel that I did far too little. I can only say that I would not hesitate again to plunge into those dreary regions, that I might be the first to place my foot on the centre of this vast territory, and finally to raise the veil which still shrouds its features, even though, like those of the veiled prophet, they should wither the beholder . . ."

He was not fated to raise the veil. The eighteen months' journey had taken toll of his health and vitality, and he slipped back into administrative work as Registrar-General and Colonial Treasurer. At the end of 1851 he retired,

leaving shortly afterwards for England to see about the education of his boys.

He left a great reputation behind him, a reputation that rested not merely on what he had done but on what he had been. There were few men who so consistently worked for the public good. He could truthfully say that he had never been tempted to set out on his expeditions by mere love of adventure; neither was he inflated by any jingoistic ideas about empire-building or painting the map red. His impulses were the scientist's desire to extend knowledge and the humanist's eagerness to increase social wealth and happiness. He was interested in the varied life of the earth, in its birds, animals, flowers. And he was appreciative of his fellow-men. His journals are full of tributes to others; admiration of their courage, good-humour, resource: and he thought less of his own triumphs than of theirs. Inevitably he roused strong feelings of loyalty in all who accompanied him on his journeys. Many of them asserted that they would "go through fire" for Captain Sturt, and metaphorically speaking they did. His reverence for human life made him, in his later years, find happiness in the thought that he had never shed the blood of a blackfellow, and he extended this compunction, almost fantastically, into other worlds. He was known, for instance, to have refrained from killing a death-adder under a bush near his house, giving as an excuse that the poor reptile had done him no harm. And Bonwick, the historian, watching him among his animals at his Adelaide home, said warmly:

"Even a cat couldn't help loving Captain Sturt."

This sensitiveness did not limit him as a man of action, but it made him loath to push himself forward in the social and official world. Undoubtedly Sturt did not get the preferment his work and talents merited. He had left all the prospects of wealth that private ventures of those days offered to enter the public service, but he met with one rebuff after another. His first appointment as Surveyor-General had to be surrendered to Frome, and afterwards, when he was acting as assistant, that office was abolished and he was given

the dull job of Registrar-General, at a lower salary. In England, his eyes still on the country he had left behind, he applied for the position of Governor of Victoria, rendered vacant by the death of Sir Charles Hotham in 1855, but was told that Mr Secretary Labouchere "does not feel justified" in recommending him. Perhaps the way he had identified himself with the country was a bar! At any rate, when, in 1859, the people of Queensland definitely asked that he should be appointed their first governor the request was denied.

Sturt had a strong desire, in his old age, to return to the country he had made his own. He wanted, as he said, "to lay his bones in Australia." But this humble wish was not granted him, either. He died near Cheltenham, England, at the age of seventy-four, his last thoughts being centred on the expedition Forrest was preparing to search for the lost explorer, Leichhardt.

THE NONCONFORMIST

John Dunmore Lang

It was a piece of sheer luck for the growing colony of New South Wales that it attracted to it, in 1823, a young Scots minister, filled with energy and public spirit. The public spirit was particularly needed. Society at the time was crudely simple in its construction. No buffer-class of liberal, professional men had yet emerged. There was the struggle of social power between the rich emancipists and the rich exclusives, with the Governor holding absolute authority and leaning now to one side, now to the other. The typical emancipist was Simeon Lord, with his factory, his trading interests, his racehorses: the typical exclusive was John Macarthur. Each had his personal ends to serve when it came to any general matter. The voice of the convict was, of course, mute, and that of the free settler, native or immigrant, was rarely heard: what is called public opinion had no reality outside the taverns of Parramatta and the Windsor road.

John Dunmore Lang was peculiarly fitted to be a tribune of the free settlers. He was vigorous, independent, combative; although he had received licence as a minister of the Gospel his interests were secular as well as religious. Perhaps more secular than religious: he himself would have denied there could be any dividing line. This young Scots callant, indeed, had a naturally political mind. His ancestors had been landholders for generations, and he had been brought up in an atmosphere where freedom and equality were, as he was so fond of saying, "a law of Nature and an ordinance of God." From the beginning he was determined to plunge into the struggle for political freedom and equality in New South Wales. All his family interests were in the new country.

His brother George had arrived in Sydney a few months ahead of him: his mother and his brother, Andrew, were to come a little later: so he was not hampered by the nostalgia that made so many immigrants waste their time brooding on what they had left behind them.

His first work was to gather a congregation around him. As early as 1809 the good Presbyterians of the Hawkesbury had built a kirk of their own at Ebenezer and worshipped in it weekly under the guidance of a devout elder: but Lang was intent on securing a public recognition of the status of his church. There were rich Presbyterians in Sydney: they included the Governor, Sir Thomas Brisbane himself, who, as a local celebrity, had patted Lang on the head when he was a schoolboy in Ayrshire. Why should they not have a church in the heart of Sydney worthy of their faith? But the Governor, though willing to subscribe personally to the erection of a church, was patronizing in his attitude to the project. Toleration, he said, unctuously, was the glory of the Church of England, and therefore if Presbyterians did not approve of her ritual, she did not forbid them to worship in any other way which they might think to glorify religion. Lang's reply to this Anglicized Scotsman was abrupt:

"Toleration," he said, "is not the glory of the Church of England, but of the British constitution. Scotsmen are not therefore reduced to the necessity of receiving toleration as a boon from the Church of England. Their civil and religious liberties were won for them by the swords of their forefathers: and they in every situation are a degenerate race if they do not vindicate their right to both."

It was his first brush with authority, and he pushed it to a successful conclusion. The next year he was back in England where he had an audience with the Earl of Bathurst, and the result of that interview was a snub to Brisbane from the Secretary of State for the Colonies and a direction to advance out of the revenue one-third of the estimated cost of the church.

So early in his career had this young Scotsman made his weight felt! He next turned his attention to public matters.

Australia was a good country, he felt, but its social atmosphere was unhealthy. He had as little liking for the Simeon Lords, with their smear of convictism, as for the Macarthurs with their aristocratic pretensions; and the officialism of the small governing group raised his hackles, always very sensitive to the sight of a uniform. These soldiers with their "pipe-clayed understandings!" They were poor colonizing material, whether officers used to giving orders or privates used to receiving them. There seemed no hope of creating the robust, democratic society he wanted to see till a stream of free immigration was set flowing, bringing in large numbers of agriculturists, tradesmen, skilled workers—men who had either the habit of independence or the strong desire for it. Scotland, of course, was the place in which to look for such men, though there were possibilities in Northern Ireland, even in Germany.

It was a matter of importance to him that the new immigrants should be largely Protestant. Catholicism (Popery was the usual term), he connected with illiteracy and a servile spirit, and his social as well as his religious prejudices were roused by the number of people coming from Southern Ireland. There was something of the missionary about him as he set out to right the balance. In spite of the grumbling of his parishioners he made frequent trips to Europe, partly to secure new ministers for his growing church, and money for his educational schemes, but mainly to stimulate emigration to his adopted country. There was a fervour about him as he spoke at open-air meetings in England and in the halls of industrial cities. Obviously he was not the usual kind of government agent. He had a little of the prophet about him, a little of the hot-gospeller. Clerks and mechanics hung on his words when he told of a country where land was easy to secure, where the climate was ideal, and where something like a Utopia might be created by people settled on their own fruitful soil. There was no insincerity in his oratory. He believed passionately in Australia's future: he had already, through long journeys on foot and horseback, come to know the country well. The settlers he brought

out felt a personal loyalty to him which showed, later on, when he was asking for political support.

These included nearly 4000 Highlanders, who had been starved out of their holdings by the famine of 1837. They had wanted to follow their own people to Canada, but funds had been lacking, and Lang was quick to seize on the chance of turning them towards Australia. He persuaded them to apply to Lord Glenelg at the Colonial Office, where money was available under the scheme that applied the receipts of land sales to immigration. In three years the whole 4000 had been transported in eighteen ships, to the great satisfaction of the robust believer in his own race. He was not so successful with some trained German vignerons whom his brother had convinced him would be useful in starting wine-growing on the Clarence. At Rio de Janeiro, on the way out, the Germans were met by agents who poured shocking tales of the "convict colony" into their ears and lured them off the ship to settle in the Argentine.

But a steady tide of settlers of the right kind was flowing in by now, and the seeds of the new democracy had been planted. As unofficial tribune, Lang's influence extended far beyond his own denomination. Wordy, aggressive, public-spirited as ever, he was to be found in all the controversies of the day, whether about land tenure, education, or the possibilities of cotton-growing in Queensland. He had opinions on every subject, often informed opinions, always emphatic ones. And in addition to his pulpit he had his platform in the press. In 1835 he had founded the *Colonist;* in 1841 it changed into the *Colonial Observer.* His tongue was never silent, nor his mind inactive. It seemed as if he were urged by some daemonic drive to stir up the sluggish life around him, to keep people from yielding to the mental torpor that comes with authoritarian government and the pursuit of private gain.

His relations with his own church were not happy. The Anglican domination he had resented when Brisbane asserted it was overthrown by the Bourke Act of 1836, which placed all denominations on an equal footing and set forth conditions

under which they could share alike in State aid for stipends and buildings. But he was just as resentful of domination by the Church of Scotland which claimed jurisdiction over colonial presbyteries. In December 1837, he set up a Synod in New South Wales, declared to be a Supreme Court—no appeal being allowed from its decisions, either in the colony or in Scotland. There were thus two bodies in the local Church, one independent and the other traditional, with its connexions overseas. After a few years they amalgamated, but Lang was still uneasy in ecclesiastical bonds, and soon persuaded his congregation to forgo State patronage and break from the Synod. Self-willed, individualistic, he could not brook the admonishments it placed upon him about attending more rigorously to his religious duties, and he denounced it from the pulpit as a "synagogue of Satan actuated by a spirit of rancorous hostility toward him which could only have emanated from the fathers of evil."

This sort of language came easily from Lang's tongue, especially when the quarrel was connected with religion. It was to create enemies around him, and land him in libel actions, but it was part of his explosive energy, and as impossible for him to restrain as the impulses that drove him out exploring from Port Phillip to the Brisbane River. There was more of the politician in him than the priest, more of the pioneer than the politician. He must be continually out in the open, slugging up the coast in some little boat or journeying to his brother's farm at the head of the Hunter. He was interested in the geology of the country, in its animal life, in the way people lived. A spirit of imaginative patriotism had burned in him ever since he had made Australia his home, and it was fed by close contact with the soil itself. He pleaded for native names for the newly-discovered hills and rivers, names like Illawarra, Parramatta, Wollongong, that had local atmosphere and significance, that were part of the quivering heat of the plains and the magic of a passing race. He gibed in verse at Macquarie River and Goulburn plains. Why should the names of itinerant officials be associated with such places, or, worse still, those of politicians overseas who

were never likely to see them? As an alternative to native names there were those of men who had been associated with the idea of freedom in the English-speaking world—Hampden, Cromwell, Washington. Or, perhaps, you could come nearer home. He was flattered when Leichhardt, whom he greatly admired, called a towering peak of basalt in the heart of the continent Mount Lang!

For his rural civilization he would have borrowed ideas that had attracted him in the towns of South America. There was, for instance, "that most interesting, useful, and important feature of all Spanish towns in the New World—a square or open area in the centre of the town." He was indignant at finding that when the surveyor who planned the town of Ipswich, in Queensland, had made provision for such a square, the Governor, Sir George Gipps, disapproved of it. Such was the wisdom with which the country was governed! Did Gipps, he asked, think that a couple of acres was too large an extent of Crown Land to sacrifice merely for the comfort and convenience of the people in a territory only 2000 miles square? Or did he think it might tempt them to hold monster meetings in the open air to pass votes of censure on indifferent governors?

It was natural that Lang, with his public interests, should turn to politics as soon as there were representatives elected by the people. The constitution of 1842 provided for this in part: of the thirty-six members of the Council only one-third were to be nominated by the Crown. Lang took his seat as one of the six members for Port Phillip, and at once ranged himself on the side of the small radical element. His chief interest at the time was in getting the administration decentralized, in separating Port Phillip and what he called Cooksland from New South Wales; but he was also concerned in extending the franchise and in the struggle for responsible government. His political career was more lively than consecutive. He was in and out of the various Parliaments, representing now Port Phillip, now Sydney, now the county of Stanley in Moreton Bay. And his political attachments were as changeable. At first he was disposed to follow Went-

worth, regarding him as the leader in the constitutional fight: for the sake of this large issue he could overlook Wentworth's private rapacity, even the scandal of his New Zealand land claims which Gipps had declared to be "utterly unparalleled in the annals of jobbery." But as the constitutional issue came near to settlement Lang drew away from his old chief; he was irrepressible in his demand for a democratic franchise, closer settlement, a breaking-up of the oligarchy of land-owners: and it was to get Lang out of the way that Wentworth inserted a special clause in the Constitution Act of 1853, excluding from Parliament all ministers of religion. But this clause was soon repealed, and from 1859 to 1869 Lang again sat in the House as member for West Sydney.

Yet his real field of work as a politician was not in Parliament but outside it. He thought less in terms of legislation than in those of concrete development—the erection of schools, the dredging of harbours, experiments in agriculture. Every project for establishing a new industry or opening a new area for settlement roused his interest. How to build up a democratic society that would be secure and independent! How to knit the crowds of immigrants to the new soil! In the leisure of his long journeys he poured out a continual spate of books, articles, poems: he acted as historian and geographer, making people familiar with the features of the country and its short human past, cramming into his pages the reports of surveyors, the records of explorers. And such was his gusto that to-day these works have still some freshness, even his lampoons, with their heavy-handed satire and lumbering wit. There was a wordiness about Lang, a repetitiveness, a tendency to go on talking after his ideas were exhausted; but how lively was his curiosity and how vigorous his mind! It is stimulating to follow him in his journeys, to listen to his opinions on cotton-growing, native customs, convict-labour, to hear him record his conviction that the country's only handicap was that its foundations had been laid by soldiers, men whose very business and profession it was to destroy their fellow-creatures "in whatever unjust and unnecessary quarrel their masters might choose to strike up for their benefit."

Naturally he made enemies, especially among the tight little group of landowners who had looked forward to holding lasting power. To Rusden, the solemn historian and panegyrist of these people, Lang was the "old disturber," the man behind every upheaval, every stirring of the mass. Rusden even saw his shadow flitting about in the background at Eureka. Hadn't Lang told the miners of the Turon that the discovery of gold would hasten the entire political freedom and independence of the country? And wasn't there a son of his at Ballarat writing subversive articles in the local paper, warning the authorities that if the demands of the diggers were not satisfied the gathering clouds of popular indignation would burst like a whirlwind over guilty and unsuspecting heads? Rusden was convinced that Lang's voice sounded in the leading articles of the Melbourne *Age*—those leading articles that during the early fifties were solidifying public opinion in support of the diggers. So many of the younger writers were "pupils" of his—David Blair, for instance, who had once been a minister in New South Wales and was now one of the most aggressive of the democratic journalists.

Perhaps he was right about Lang's influence. It was part of the "old disturber's" mission to act as yeast in the social life of the country, to encourage the emphatic expression of opinion, the impulse to rebel against arbitrary power. His words carried further than those of any politician. All over the country he had followers, some passionate in their loyalty; people who would never have emigrated except for their faith in him. None of his disputes over church matters, his vituperative outbursts that were often a mere rush of blood to the head, weakened his hold on the popular imagination. If a vote had been taken for a national leader in the middle of the century there is little doubt who would have been chosen.

At heart he was republican and wanted to see Australia follow a similar course to the United States of America. All his schemes for the division of the country into smaller units were designed for this end. In *The Coming Event* he made

a sustained plea for complete separation from the United Kingdom.

". . . Nationality, or their entire freedom and independence, is absolutely necessary for the social welfare and political advancement of the Australian colonies. Give us this, and you give us everything to enable us to become a great and glorious people. Withhold this, and you withhold everything."

To him there could be no healthy civic life without full political independence. He loathed the intellectual timidity that went with colonialism. It kept people, he insisted, from thinking and acting like adult citizens of the world: it stunted their development. So much of the current talk about what could or could not be done under the latest constitutional charter was "milk-pap for bearded men." Sovereignty resided in the people: wasn't this a law of Nature and an ordinance of God?

"It is unsafe in the highest degree to counteract a law of Nature: it is positively sinful to resist an ordinance of God."

Like so many advanced democrats of his day he placed great emphasis on political forms. There was inspiration to him in a name. The Republic! He was comparatively unaware of the power that financial and cultural forces exercised in keeping new countries "colonial." The only thing that tempered his enthusiasm for separation was a doubt as to the use to which an independent Australia might put the moneys accruing from the sale of waste lands. He did not want to see these developed by coolie labour: he looked forward to their gradual occupation by the English-speaking peoples. And so any Treaty of Independence must provide that, for fifty years ahead at least, half the proceeds of public land sales should be devoted to the promotion of emigration from Great Britain and Ireland.

Such were the ideas of this sturdy Presbyterian: he held them robustly to the end, revising *The Coming Event* after a period of twenty years, but refusing to water down its main demand. The emphasis of his voice and his gestures did not grow fainter with approaching age, and this gives a peculiar integrity to his career. As an old man he was the same John

Dunmore Lang who had hotly resented the patronage of Governor Brisbane. It would have been impossible for him to change any part of himself without remodelling his whole character: and only a direct message from his Creator could have convinced him of the need of that.

Yet, with all his faults and limitations, he was the most significant figure in the Australia of his day. He brought the kind of passion to public affairs that most of the men around him reserved for the pursuit of their private ends. And in a society still suffering from the palsy of the convict system and authoritarian government he stimulated people to think for themselves, speak their full minds openly, stand upright on their own feet. Even more than Parkes (who kept a trace of the sentimental Cockney in him) he was an image of the stubborn democracy he had done so much to build.

THE POLITICIAN

Sir Henry Parkes

On 16 September 1850 a great crowd of Sydney people assembled in the old Barracks Square to protest against the revival of transportation, which had been assented to by the hybrid Legislative Council. Several ships had already arrived with their loads of convicts and the sight of them lying at anchor in the harbour aroused a heat in the popular mind that threatened, more than once, to flame out in violent action. Something like a national feeling had been created by this menace to the social life of the country. In Sydney the atmosphere was that of a general strike. Shops were shut, warehouses closed their doors, and every class was represented at the meeting of protest, except the handful of landowners who believed that their prosperity depended on a renewed supply of servile labour—on a system which in the words of James Martin, the leading solicitor of Sydney, had already "enervated their characters, depraved their manners, given them false notions of labour and capital, and in many instances sown the seeds of their own ruin."

Sporadic action had been taken in Melbourne and Hobart to prevent convicts from being landed, but more organized effort was needed. Those who sponsored the meeting believed that an association should be formed to unite the whole country in a movement of resistance, and the final result was the "Australian Anti-transportation League," which succeeded in its end. Perhaps the germ of Federation may be found in this realization, at a crucial moment, that the interests of the scattered colonies were fundamentally one. Anyhow the meeting marked the first public appearance of a young man who was later to become identified with the

federal idea, a man who, bent with years and political struggles, was to preside at the first convention of delegates called to lay the foundations of the new Commonwealth.

At the time Henry Parkes had already won some little reputation as an exponent of democratic ideas. Lively, adaptable, with a mobile, clean-shaven face and shrewd, puckered eyes, he attracted people by his fluent tongue and his natural intelligence. Also by his transparent honesty. He was representative of the immigrants pouring into the country—skilled artisans and small traders who had been brought up to believe in education, middle-class respectability, and the possibility of creating a humane, generous world by broadening freedom slowly down from precedent to precedent. In early youth, Parkes had been influenced by Chartism and had listened to Cobbett, Altwood and Dan O'Connell; he had drunk in the political philosophy of Bentham, he had pored over Shelley, Leigh Hunt and Byron. An appetite for literature and ideas had been formed in him. Yet all this self-education did not advance his prospects at home. He was obviously the type of young man who could count on finding more scope in a new country than an old one.

But his first experiences of Australia had been harsh. Coming out in 1839 with a frail girl-wife and no money, he had found Sydney in one of its periodic troughs of depression after a bad drought. His first home was a bare room in a side street, with a box he had picked up on the ship as its only furniture. It was quite impossible for him to get work at his own trade, that of ivory-turner. He had to leave town and go up-country as a farm labourer, the rate of pay being £30 a year and a ration-and-a-half, largely made up of rice. Washing sheep, sinking post holes, sleeping on a sheet of bark, his feeling of disillusionment was bitter. His one thought was to save up enough to go home again. It was some time before he could say:

"Henceforth the country of my children shall be mine. Australia has afforded me a better home than my motherland, and I will love her with a patriot's love."

Eleven years of hard battling had by then matured him,

given him a confidence in his talents and his destiny. From the first he had been lucky in making good friends, particularly Charles Harpur, the craggy, thoughtful poet whom Kendall called "the first and the favourite child" of the Australian muse. And he was beginning to be well known in Sydney. There were people who saw in the fluent, pale-faced young democrat, with his racy humour, his apt quotations from Mill and Bentham, his gift for holding a crowd, just the popular leader needed to stand up to the governing group, headed by Wentworth and James Macarthur. Apart from the question of abolishing transportation, both the trading classes and the masses were interested in securing a liberal constitution and easy access to the land. To Parkes there seemed a need for public discussion of these matters, and when he founded the *Empire* he was given enthusiastic support. There had been no liberal organ in Sydney since Smith Hall's *Monitor* had died, and the time was ripe for the establishment of a newspaper with progressive ideas. Besides there was Parkes's own need for political expression.

"I was myself intoxicated with the hard and exciting mission of a propagandist," he says. "It was assigned to me to create and spread throughout the land a sound and enlightened public opinion."

The *Empire*, almost as much as the achievement of responsible government, marked the beginning of a new era. Around the paper gathered some of the brightest intellects in the community—men like James Martin, Daniel Deniehy, and (later on) Gavan Duffy—and between them they threshed out the policies that were, for a generation, to guide the public life of New South Wales. Parkes himself was less an originator of ideas than an expositor. A warm, generous nature and bitter experience had given him strong democratic sympathies, but he thought with his blood rather than his mind, acted on impulse rather than reason. Yet he was quick to see the point of an argument, quick to embellish it with his own instances, and to use it persuasively or with vigour. He could gain the ear of his fellows, either with tongue or pen, and he had an instinctive understanding of human nature, a

shrewd political sense, that made him a success when he entered the Legislative Council of 1854.

A popular figure was needed to oppose Wentworth, to take the old lion's place when he passed, and there was no one better fitted to fulfil this function than Parkes. He had a representative quality about him. With his vague idealism, his varied experience, his interest in education and social betterment, he was an appropriate voice of the new groups beginning to exercise power. Before long he had mastered the usages of the new Parliament, elected in 1856, and won the dominating place in it that he maintained, whether in office or not, till the last year of his life.

Naturally the most pressing question of the time was the land. How to bring those vast reserves into production, and, as the phrase went, open up the country! The early work had been done by pastoralists, who drove their herds before them into new territory and secured their grazing leases for a peppercorn rental. They had established themselves, these pastoralists, and secured political power: before the coming of popular government there was no one to oppose them. The land laws they made were such as to serve their own interests, which they passionately asserted were the interests of the country. And there was a seeming point in their argument. Their wool, hides and beef were the country's chief source of revenue: how could it refuse them anything they wanted in the way of easy terms and cheap labour? To talk about the country being settled by farmers was to deal in fantasies. The land was not fit for agriculture. Had not Charles Darwin, standing on the plains near Bathurst, said that the country would never grow wheat?

In sober truth everything possible had been done to prevent the small farmer from getting suitable land and to hinder the development of agriculture. The pastoralist could lease any area he wanted at ten shillings a square mile: he could pick out the choice spots at his leisure and buy them at the low current price: he could secure credit for his operations by the Lien on Wool Act and the Cattle Mortgage Act, legislation passed by his own small group for their mutual benefit.

The intending farmer was shut out from all these things. He could not lease land for agriculture: intricate webs of red tape prevented him from selecting areas he wanted: and if he managed to establish himself there was no credit to be obtained on a crop of growing wheat. The men who maintained that the country was not suitable for farming took great pains to see that their assertion was not disproved. Consequently after seventy years of settlement New South Wales was still importing breadstuffs from South America and other countries.

Parkes himself did not know much about the land but he was responsible for unearthing a man who did. When in 1855, during the life of the old Legislative Council, he moved for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the state of agriculture "with special reference to the raising of wheaten grain" there appeared from the country a youngish farmer with the tough sense of Cobbett, long practical experience, and a forthright manner of putting forward his ideas. John Robertson had been brought up on the land, working first for his father on the Upper Hunter and then for himself: in twenty-two years of experimental farming he had used his eyes and his brain. And he knew how to deal robustly with the nonsense about the country not being fit for crops: hadn't he reaped upwards of forty bushels an acre from his own land time and again? Not only was the Hunter fit for agriculture, he asserted, but all the alluvial land of the New England district and the Liverpool Plains. A radical with a cutting edge to his tongue, he was not slow in explaining the reasons that kept those great acres under pastoral lease.

The chief result of the inquiry was the Land Bill of 1861, which Robertson, now in the House, pushed through in the face of strong opposition from the old guard. It was instrumental in breaking the power of the pastoralists and creating a new class of small farmers, favourable, on the whole, to liberal ideas. After this, for over a generation of political life, the careers of Robertson and Parkes were fated to run on parallel lines, even when they were rivals for office. Their

characters and tastes were different, but complementary. Robertson was the man of the soil, interested in rural things primarily, knowing how to secure a stack of wheat against weevils, or what methods of sowing were best calculated to guard against disaster in dry seasons. His mind was keen, dry, practical: his radicalism that of a small landholder intent on resisting all kinds of monopolies. Even when age mellowed him, giving him suavity, there was still an atmosphere of wholemeal bread about him, an ironic twinkle in his eye, a country directness in his speech. Parkes, on the other hand, was essentially urban and adaptable, responsive to the changes around him, tactful, fluid by nature rather than fixed. He had glowing ideas about the future of the country and wanted to promote wholesale immigration, believing that the more people came flowing in the better for all concerned. And he was as interested in the community's culture as its comfort. He had the self-educated man's faith in education widely spread, in "mental training as the foundation of every social virtue." His Public Schools Act of 1866 was a corollary to Robertson's Land Bill in the building-up of a free and enlightened community.

The latter half of the nineteenth century was a period of small things in New South Wales politics. Most of the great controversies had been settled, and the lines of political development laid down. Free trade was accepted: the questions of land and education largely solved: government was a matter of administration. What was really interesting in the life and growth of the country was taking place outside the parliamentary sphere. It was a time when the idea of institutional culture was beginning to spread. Each small township was building its School of Arts, a centre that acted as a theatre, dance-hall and library. There were lectures on scientific subjects, readings from Dickens and Mark Twain, even entertainments that kept alive the fragments of verse and song remaining from earlier days—our rather thin substitutes for folk art. The School of Arts: cheap books: education that was free, secular and compulsory: these were to be the channels for a general distribution of culture. And through

those years Parkes gradually stamped his image on the popular mind, and became accepted as a leader. Even before his first ministry which lasted from 1872 to 1875 he was the most widely-known public figure of the day. In 1861 he had travelled to England on an emigration mission and there had met Cobden and Bright, become friendly with Carlyle, and formed contacts with other great mid-Victorians. Some of their rather solemn dignity was transmitted to him. "He had always in his mind's eye his own portrait as that of a great man," said Alfred Deakin, "and constantly adjusted himself to it." Grey-whiskered, shaggy-haired, frock-coated, he took on a venerable look, suitable to the fatherhood of his adopted country. All over New South Wales progress was being made in a way visible to the eye. John Robertson's Land Act had led to closer settlement and that meant the building of roads, bridges and railways, the creation of small townships. Many new schools were being opened as a consequence of Parkes's Public Schools Act. He took pleasure in travelling about widely, using the ceremonies connected with these developments as a means of getting in touch with the people. And he was never happier, never more himself, than when making a speech at the opening of some school or School of Arts. All his simple humanity came out as he told over and over again the story of his early struggles, his resolve to become acquainted with the best that had been thought and written in the world: insisted that light could be brought to any humble bush home by a shelf of books, beauty by a garden in front of the door. There was never any suggestion of talking from a height. His homely humour, his uncertain aspirates, were guarantees that, in spite of little struggles for office, for place and precedence, he would always remain a man of the people.

In the House he was assiduous in evolving schemes for improving the general tone of social life. There was still a good deal of human wreckage left over from convict days, and a brutality, or, at any rate, a carelessness in the treatment of the sick, the insane, the youthful delinquents of both sexes. The conflicts of a growing society had not left

much room for the spread of humanitarian ideas. By the establishment of the training-ship *Vernon*, Parkes did something for the reclamation of young male offenders; and in his journeys through the country he was never more gratified than when he met farm-workers who assured him proudly that they were *Vernon* boys. The Industrial Schools Act was the work of Sir James Martin, but Parkes can be given credit for an improved treatment of the sick and the insane. He sent a capable alienist, Dr Manning, to Europe to study the working of the most modern asylums; he secured the help of Florence Nightingale in engaging a staff of nurses for New South Wales. In his administration there was a sober care and attention to detail that set a standard for other ministers.

When it came to wider matters he was generally in line with the national spirit, the spirit of self-dependence, that was gradually making itself felt. He opposed the sending of a contingent to the Sudan on the ground that "the war in Egypt is a war of invasion against barbarous tribes who, in comparison with us, are fighting on their own soil." And by his Chinese Restriction Bill of 1888, he asserted the principle that the country had the right to choose the constituent elements of its future population. There had already been violent protests at the way the Chinese were pouring into the mining fields and coastal cities, and every day it seemed likely that a popular clash between the two races might lead to an international incident, yet the imperial authorities when asked to regulate the influx by treaty-arrangement with the Chinese Government had ignored the request. Finally Parkes determined to act independently.

"Neither for Her Majesty's ships of war," he said belligerently, "nor for Her Majesty's representative on the spot, nor for the Secretary of State for the Colonies, do we intend to turn aside from our purpose, which is to terminate the landing of the Chinese on these shores for ever. . . ."

Luckily there seemed no disposition on the part of the parties challenged to call his bluff. China was probably indifferent: Downing Street had already put itself in the wrong

by its refusal to consider his reasonable request that Australia should be given the same protection by treaty arrangements as the United States of America had secured for itself. And it must be said that such strong language was unusual from Parkes: it was forced out of him by the feeling that the dignity of the country had been offered an affront.

He was by this time an old man, an Elder Statesman, one of the few public figures known beyond the confines of his colony. He had made his disastrous experiments in business, had seen election triumphs and defeats, had been the chief figure in several cabinets. Abroad, he was received as a striking representative of the new world that had been created by British migrants. Perhaps his voice counted more in external affairs than in domestic ones. In spite of his democratic sympathies he was drifting out of touch with the growing economic life of the country and the questions that concerned the mass of the people. The great strikes that began to break out in the marine and pastoral industries toward the end of the eighties seemed to him sinister upheavals that had their origins in subversive minds. "The people," that vague abstraction sentimentally invoked by him once, became a many-headed monster with a million hands. He had no objection to unionism so long as it remained merely an idea, but he was troubled by men being pulled off their carts in the streets and turned away from the docks by pickets. And these new delegates of Labour, dribbling into the House, were talking of fixing by law the hours of work in the coal industry! He, who had taken the chair at the first Eight Hours' meeting in Sydney, felt this an outrage. He still regarded eight hours as long enough for any one to work, but a man should be a free agent, disposing of his time and faculties according to his own convenience. No parliament had the moral power to legislate on his hours of work!

The disciple of Cobden, the fighter against land-monopoly and oligarchic government, was uneasy in this new atmosphere of conflict between Capital and Labour. There had always been a vagueness about his political principles, in so far as they touched the economic structure, and this gave an

inconsequence to his actions. Words were contradicted by deeds, or by other words. Even in his early career this lack of consistency had been evident. He was strongly against the introduction of coolie labour by the pastoralists, but when the compositors of the *Empire* struck during one of the gold-rushes of the fifties his mind quickly turned to the idea of importing Eurasians from India. At one moment he was crusading against unemployment and vile social conditions: the next advocating wholesale immigration from England. For a while he was attracted by the idea of building up secondary industries in New South Wales with the help of a tariff: a personal interview with Cobden brought him back to Free Trade. Such contradictions seem to show a shallow mind, moving from point to point, through considerations of expediency.

Yet there was a hint of greatness about Parkes, a greatness unaffected by the inconsequence of his ideas or the shabbiness of some of his shifts as a politician. He was the average self-educated man of his time, very much enlarged. To the end he kept his public spirit and his private integrity. On the whole, the poverty in which he spent his last days reflects honour upon him. It was not merely a matter of bankruptcies and prodigal spending. He was essentially simple in his tastes, and if he had been so minded he could have had plenty of opportunities, during his long term of office, of making himself financially secure. But he could boast that neither he nor his family had ever profited at the expense of the country. His family life, indeed, he guarded with a quiet dignity. When his second wife was not received at Government House he refused to attend public dinners there, saying that he could not enter any door that was closed to her. On national affairs he had a wider outlook than some of his fellows. Sir John Robertson, his old friend and rival, could only say brusquely when he heard of the proposals for federation: "What is Parkes doing now? What does it all mean? The whole thing comes from England. That old Derby commenced it." Rooted in his local interests the ageing democrat was unable to see the national movement as anything

but a sinister scheme for imperial federation that would destroy the autonomy hardly won. But Parkes was steadily following ideas he had outlined in early articles in the *Empire*, ideas whose value had been first shown in the collective action against transportation.

One has to come back to the representative quality in him to establish his importance. He was essentially a politician, a voice for the predominant social groups of his day. His life stretched over the greater part of the nineteenth century (from 1815 to 1896), a long period in the history of Australia, and for most people he was a symbol of growth. There is a comic side to his figure—a side eagerly seized on by the cartoonists of the time. People laughed at his shrewd, satyr-like face almost hidden in a tangle of grey hair and beard, at his struggles with his creditors, at his wistful desire to be taken for a great mid-Victorian figure, at his sentimental poems, his dedications to Woolner and Tennyson. But there was never any malice in the popular laugh. "A great grievance," John Dunmore Lang summed him up, "but a friend of the community."

THE PAINTER

Louis Buvelot

APPRECIATION of painting was a comparatively slow development in Australia. That is hardly to be wondered at: the materials for the cultivation of such tastes did not exist. Lord Rosebery, when he visited the country, described the wealthy inhabitants as "sitting on thirty-guinea ottomans looking at thirty-shilling oleographs." And the oleographs would probably represent "A Stag at Bay" or idyllic English scenes with buttercups starring the green meadows—scenes that were a relief in their lushness and cool abundance from the harsh outlines and quivering light of the Australian world outside. Most of the early settlers felt not merely an indifference, but a positive hostility to their new environment. To them it was, as Aldous Huxley says of New Mexico, "empty and alien as the moon." They conceived themselves to be in mortal conflict with those iron trees, this stubborn soil. It was a fight that went on not only on the physical plane but in that of the imagination. They could see no beauty in a landscape that was so different from the one they had known in childhood, that had not yet been tamed and humanized, that had no luxuriant foliage but merely ragged growths that hardly covered the bony structure of the earth itself. They disliked the shape of the trees, the absence of vivid colour, what seemed to them the general sameness of hue and tone.

It was left to a later generation to discover that this sameness was largely an illusion.

"To their eyes, too, quickened by emotion," says Henry Handel Richardson, in *Ultima Thule*, "it was left to descry the colours in the apparent colourlessness: the upturned earth that showed red, white, puce, gamboge: the blue in the grey

of the new leafage: the geranium-red of new scrub: the purple-blue depths of the shadows. To know, too, in exile, a rank nostalgia for the scent of the aromatic foliage: for the honey-fragrance of the wattle: the perfume that rises hot and heavy as steam from vast paddocks of sweet flowering lucerne —even for the sting and tang of countless miles of bush ablaze."

But this changed attitude to the landscape was not a matter of simple patriotism; an inevitable growth in a new generation of native-born. It is natural to a human being to love the scenes among which he was bred, the hills and valleys on which his eyes first opened, yet this feeling may weaken or vanish, unless it find a sanction in art: particularly if the general influences of life are against it. In Australia, the hostility of the earlier settlers to their surroundings was partly bequeathed to their children, who read English books, pored over English pictures, and almost felt they were aliens in a harsh and remote world that had no beauty or significance. Only the work of artists, looking around with fresh eyes, could lift this imaginary burden. To the artist, in so far as he has an original gift, beauty and significance are not a matter of sentimental associations; they are something to be discovered and revealed. And it was the painters who first saw the Australian landscape as it really was.

"It is quite apparent," says Max Meldrum, "that the artist has to mix more shades and varieties of colour than when painting in Europe: and so we come to the paramount distinction, different as I am aware it is, from that of popular acceptance—the Australian landscape, subtle and varied in colour, the European rich and monotonous, the one changing its first sensation of monotony to an ultimate realization of variety: the other as strangely reversing this order of impression."

But this was not an easy discovery, even for painters. Indeed there were few painters of any talent in the early days, merely dilettantes with a faculty for sketching or amiable ladies with a taste for water-colours. It was not until the sixties that a genuine painter appeared, and he had an im-

mediate influence. Wandering down Bourke Street one evening James Smith, the art critic of the *Argus*, saw a water-colour in a photographer's window, and was struck by its quality. The subject was a Swiss mountain-pine, and Smith thought he recognized in it the hand of a "master." Going inside to inquire about it, he found that the artist was Louis Buvelot, a French Swiss, who had recently come to Melbourne: a man of middle age, tall, bearded, yet, as Smith said afterward, with something of the look of Leonardo da Vinci of the Uffizi portrait.

Buvelot had had a varied experience abroad. Born in 1814 at Morges—his father a postal official, his mother a school mistress—he had learnt drawing at Lausanne and studied painting in Paris. Then as a young man of twenty-one he had emigrated to Brazil, where he devoted himself to his art, in spite of the many temptations of commerce. He seems to have been moderately successful. One of his pictures, "The Harbour at Bahia," was engraved in Paris, and later, when he moved to Rio, the Emperor bought several of his pictures and decorated him with the Order of the Rose. Poor health recalled Buvelot to Switzerland in 1852, where he taught drawing and showed his pictures in different exhibitions till 1865, when he had an impulse to emigrate to Melbourne in the wake of the gold discoveries.

By then these discoveries were, of course, a thing of the past, but they had changed Melbourne from a village into a flourishing city of nearly half a million people, with solid public buildings, a University, Houses of Parliament. Buvelot hung out his shingle in Bourke Street, starting business as a photographer. But he did not need to stay in this occupation long. Small commissions came to him and, his wants being modest, he was soon able to retire to the suburbs and devote all his time to painting. The woman he married was a successful teacher of French, and she, believing in his work, insisted that, if necessary, she could make a living for the two of them. Then there was Smith, the critic, proclaiming to the people of Melbourne through the columns of the *Argus* that a very notable landscape painter had settled among them.

"What most struck me about him," says Smith, "was his complete and very rapid adaptation to the new *milieu* into which he had entered. Each of his pictures—oil, water-colour, pencil—is an integral description of our landscape. It is as well understood, as faithful and true, as if the artist had spent all his life among this scenery. There are no recollections of his former studies in Brazil or Switzerland, either in the design, colour, atmosphere or general understanding of Australian landscape."

This is perhaps an exaggeration: looking at Buvelot's pictures to-day we are not struck by their success in capturing subtleties of light and colour. But it is true that he was a real artist in his approach, and that he set himself to recording faithfully what was characteristic in the landscape about him. He made journeys into the country: he tried to throw off preconceived notions as to what was picturesque or romantic. And (a matter of some importance to a landscape painter, after all) he was genuinely attracted by what he saw. There was the eternal gum-tree, despised by the early settlers because of its sparse shade, the dull sheen of its foliage. "It is so beautiful," said Buvelot, "it can take so many shapes." To an extent, he was successful in opening other people's eyes to this beauty. At an exhibition in 1869 he showed two works, "Summer Evening at Templestowe" and "Winter Morning at Heidelberg," which aroused so much interest that they were bought by the Melbourne Gallery; next year the same gallery paid 125 guineas (a large sum in those days) for his "Waterpool at Coleraine," and, in a local sense, the reputation of Buvelot was established. Two years later he sent his large picture, "On the Woods Point Road" to the London Exhibition, where it was awarded a gold medal.

By this time Buvelot had become something of a figure in Melbourne, or at least in the small quarter of it that concerned itself with Art. It was a period when ideas of institutional culture were becoming popular. In most of the larger townships of Victoria there was an art centre, known as a School of Design. One had been opened in the old Trades Hall, Carlton, and here Buvelot worked as a teacher of land-

scape painting. Young men made pilgrimages to his home in Fitzroy where he lived quietly, painting upstairs in his studio during the daytime and strolling in the evening with his stick and his dog. There was a continental atmosphere about "Ma Retraite," standing back from the road and shut in by its trees and vines. Madame was shrewd but hospitable, glad to welcome any one who could talk about art with her lion. She had been drawn to Buvelot by his pictures: she felt he was a great man.

"Take away that rubbish!" she had stormed, at a local exhibition, when she saw a picture of his skied and lesser works hung on the line.

And such was her character that it is said the officials quickly obeyed her. Buvelot himself had an air of authority, in spite of his simplicity and lack of pretension.

"He wore the clothes of a peasant," said a Frenchman, "and had the look of a king."

Though he never troubled to learn much English (his wife relieved him of the burden of ordinary intercourse) he could be explicit enough about the problems of painting with the young men who visited him. One of these was John Ford Paterson, an artist with a delicate and poetic talent, who was making his own experiments in translating the Australian landscape to canvas. Another was F. W. McCubbin, also something of a pioneer. McCubbin freely confessed his debt to Buvelot.

"There was no one before him to point out the way," he wrote afterwards. "He possessed there, in himself, the genius to understand and catch the salient living features of the country. I remember, as if it were yesterday, standing one evening a long time ago watching the sunset in the trees at Studley Park: and it was largely through Buvelot that I realized the beauty of the scene."

Such was the influence of the old man on the younger artists who were feeling their way to an appreciation of the true character of the Australian landscape. Buvelot had something to teach them technically, but probably his most valuable lesson was the advice he gave them to look at nature

with their own eyes. Here was a virgin subject utterly different from Constable's England, or Corot's France: they had to study it intensely if they meant to capture its tones and colours. He talked of "learning" the landscape as if it were something that could only be mastered by long and patient observation. There was the scene he had painted in "The Waterpool at Coleraine."

"I loved it," he said, "and for three weeks I went every day at the same time and learnt it."

And he could be devastating with those who demanded more "local colour" in his pictures. Local colour, to such people, meant the strange forms of animal life that, to European eyes, gave quaintness to the earlier drawings. To a lady who asked why there were no kangaroos, wallabies or aboriginals in his drawings, he said dryly:

"They are there, madam, only they are hidden by the scrub."

Under Buvelot's inspiration a school of genuine landscape painters began to apear in Melbourne. A frequent visitor to his house during his last years was Tom Roberts, who had come back from Paris in 1885, his head full of the doctrines of "*plein air*" he had imbibed from the impressionists. Roberts was perhaps not a very gifted painter, but he had vigour and independence; sufficient alertness, too, to see that Buvelot's work was a growing-point, from which he and others could branch out. Together with Arthur Streeton and Charles Conder, a young Englishman of talent, he formed a camp at Warrandyte, on the Yarra, and from this camp came pictures that have definitely affected Australian painting, particularly Streeton's "Golden Summer" and "Still Glides the Stream." Streeton's nature, unlike that of Buvelot, was facile and lyrical. He treated the landscape about him broadly, and his brilliant impressionism, with its emphasis on blinding light and colour, had a freshness that gave him an immediate popular appeal.

So the basis of Australian landscape-painting was laid. Twenty years after Buvelot's death in 1888, exhibitions of Australian paintings had become a normal feature of city life, and, to some extent, the oleograph had been superseded as a

decoration for wealthy homes. In a little while the buying of pictures was to become a fashionable cult. Doctors bought etchings for their waiting-rooms: speculators sought out the work of promising young artists in anticipation of rising prices. And naturally this interest in their work created in the artists a new awareness of their public—an awareness that probably would have been resented by painters like Buvelot. D. H. Souter pictures Tom Roberts coming over to Sydney in the early nineties and rating his fellow-artists on their obscure way of living, their avoidance of social functions.

"There is no occasion, dear boy, for an artist to be a boor. A man may be able to paint decently well and also know how to comport himself in good society. Besides, you don't as a rule sell your stuff to people who rent cottages at seventeen-and-six a week. Business, my dear boy, business."

It is too soon to estimate the absolute value of most of the painting that has appeared under the stimulus of this boom. Probably it is less than that of our literature. There has been no Australian painter with the universal significance of Henry Handel Richardson: none who has penetrated the surface of the country as deeply as Henry Lawson. But whatever may be the absolute value of this art there can be no doubt about its social importance. It has helped Australians to see the characteristic features of their country, to regard them with love and warmth. It has strengthened the link between the people and the soil.

Buvelot's own pictures, it must be admitted, have lost most of their freshness. Their tones look muddy to-day: their colour-schemes a little drab. It is hard to see what there was in them to stimulate the vision of their time. But this is true of a good deal of art that has done its work and been assimilated. If Buvelot was not a great artist, he was a great pioneer. His personality and his practice awakened the latent capabilities of other men. It is enlightening to remember that such painters as John Ford Paterson, Julian Ashton, and later, Max Meldrum, regarded him as their master, and that the young Streeton, coming home from his funeral, felt that it was a great thing to have lived in the same town with such a man.

THE JUDGE

George Higinbotham

HIGINBOTHAM was admitted to the Victorian Bar in March 1854, having arrived in the country a month before. It was a year of political and social ferment for Victoria. The crowds of people that had poured into the colony since gold was found at Ballarat and Bendigo had changed its whole aspect and the problems of its government. A simple community, hitherto administered in a military or feudal way, was beginning to feel the pressure of new floods of life, and dams and locks were creaking beneath the strain. Hopes of a new Eldorado had filled the immigrants who flocked in from all over the world to pitch their tents in Melbourne's Canvas Town and later choke the unmade roads to the goldfields: but for many there had been quick disillusionment. Nuggets were not strewn about the bony ridges over which they jolted on their bullock-drays. Prosperity was most easily won by those who had something to trade. The alluvial gold was petering out and the hard-up diggers were protesting, not only against the monthly licence-fee that cut deep into their scanty earnings, but against the brutal officiousness of the police in collecting it. Ideas of revolt were in the air. The Reform League of Ballarat had a programme of demands that included nearly all the points of the British People's Charter—universal suffrage, vote by ballot, payment of members—and the growing tension between members and officials was to culminate towards the end of the year in armed conflict at Eureka.

It was an atmosphere that could hardly fail to affect young Higinbotham, set though his character already was. He was Irish, of mingled Scottish and Dutch ancestry, with a long

line of independent middle-class forebears behind him. In build he was small, but powerful, with a head of classic nobility—"Greek-browed Higinbotham" is Bernard O'Dowd's phrase for him. There was a touch of the Puritan in his make-up, but it was sweetened, not exactly by humour, but rather by generous instincts and a natural humility. From Trinity College he had gone to London, where he had earned his living by reporting for the *Morning Chronicle* before being admitted as a barrister at Lincoln's Inn: but accounts of the new country had attracted him. He said afterwards that he saw no prospects ahead of him in London.

Naturally his first romantic idea was to dig for gold, but that was soon upset. A friend in London had advised him to pack his wig and gown, as they would be more useful to him than pick and shovel, and so it proved. Before long he had more work in journalism and at the Bar than he could handle. Melbourne was developing rapidly, having changed within a decade from a scattered village to something like a metropolis. In 1842 the population of Victoria was 23,799: fifteen years later it had increased to 410,766. Intoxicated by this quick growth in the country, the capital was laying down solid public buildings, creating a University, public library, Houses of Parliament, and making grandiose plans for the future. New forces had been released everywhere.

Two years after he had landed in the country, Higinbotham was offered the editorship of the *Argus*, which was then the principal paper in the town, having absorbed John Pascoe Fawkner's *Patriot*. He accepted the appointment on condition that he should have a free hand in the direction of the paper and so be able to shape its policy according to his own views. Strange as it may seem nowadays, there was agreement about the terms. The proprietor, Edward Wilson, was an Englishman who had been running the paper on vaguely liberal lines. Though a squatter, he was in favour of an enlightened land policy: his attitude to the administration was acutely critical: in the conflicts at Ballarat he had leant toward the popular side. Probably in asking Higinbotham to take over the editorship of the paper he thought he had found an able

young man who would echo his voice. But Higinbotham, in insisting on independence, had his own conception of it. The proprietor should have no more control of the paper than was permitted to members of the outside public. This meant that when Wilson sent in letters they were printed, commented upon, and, when necessary, confuted. And since men like Wilson tend to grow conservative in a new and rapidly-changing society such a situation could not possibly last. Higinbotham, at the first sign of pressure, gracefully retired.

But that short period of editorship was, for him, one of ripening. It brought him into quick touch with the life of his adopted country, acquainted him with its problems, changed him from an immigrant into a citizen. He had to form an opinion on all sorts of questions, and with Higinbotham this meant mastering the details. All around him the air was echoing with verbal hammering. A new society was in process of construction: he had to help build it. There was the problem of the land, for one thing. Victoria had been a paradise for pastoralists in the forties (Rolf Boldrewood's Golden Age) but how was the vast new population, drifting away from the goldfields, to be settled if the lands were locked up for sheep and cattle? What were the possibilities for farming, anyhow? David Syme of the *Age* had conceived of a new industrial society, based on Protection, and his ideas, hammered out insistently with argument and rhetoric, were gaining ground in the country. But in spite of the great increase of population the old landed interests still held power, being solidly entrenched in the Upper House.

Any development, then, was bound to begin with a political struggle—a struggle between the Lower House, elected on a democratic franchise, and the Upper one based upon property. And in such a conflict the question of where supreme authority lay was vital. Responsible government had been granted to Victoria in 1854, but there was a vagueness in the Constitution Act that left one crucial point uncertain: how much authority the governor had, by virtue of his Royal Instructions, in dealing with his ministers, that is, with the direct representatives of the people. On the face of the new

Constitution, Victoria had achieved complete self-government, but the governor's instructions were couched in terms that made it seem he was an official of the British Government in a still-dependent colony. And it was in clearing up this position, in asserting the limitations of the governor's powers, the right of the people to complete control over their own affairs, that most of Higinbotham's life was to be spent.

He was particularly well-equipped for the task. He had no direct interest in economic questions—the building of roads and bridges, the creation of industries—but he had a passion for democratic forms, and a strong sense of logic. If self-government in Victoria was to mean anything, the people must have full power in local matters and the governor must act on the advice of his ministers. For the time being the economic issues were submerged in this conflict about powers.

It was forced upon Higinbotham soon after he entered politics. In May 1861 he was elected to Parliament as member for Brighton: two years later he accepted office in McCulloch's ministry as Attorney-General. Almost immediately there was a little incident that showed his conception of his new position. Sir Redmond Barry, a judge of the Supreme Court, in setting off on a holiday trip to Sydney, wrote officially to the Governor to acquaint him of the fact. The Governor casually referred the matter to the Attorney-General, with a note saying that he presumed the judges had a legal right to take the step. Higinbotham's reply was that they had neither a right to take leave nor to report it to the Governor direct. Later he informed the Governor that he could not permit any "officer of his Department" to place himself outside the limits of responsible government and communicate with the Attorney-General by means of letters addressed to the Governor in person. His firm stand led to a definite regulation of the matter.

It was not the slight to himself that was in question. An unobtrusive citizen, who would hang on to the straps of a crowded bus going home, Higinbotham was always jealous of the dignity of his office, quick to resent any slight to popular government. And a major issue soon presented itself. The

conflict between the Cabinet and the Upper House had come to a head because of some new tariff clauses which, after being thrown out by the Upper House, had been sent back again, tacked on to an Appropriation Act. The Upper House rejected the Act, and at once the Government was faced with the problem of finding money to carry on the services of the country. Firm in the belief that it had a right to control finance, it adopted several dubious expedients for collecting revenue, and after McCulloch, the Premier, had advised the Governor to grant a dissolution he was returned with a large majority.

Popular will and opinion had been expressed in the matter, but now Downing Street took a hand. Sir Charles Darling, who had listened to the advice of his ministers, was recalled, and at once the issue became a wider one than the struggle between the two Houses. Were the Victorian people to settle their own problems, it was asked, or be dictated to from outside? It is true that Cardwell, then Secretary of State, had based his censure of Darling on the "illegality" of certain measures he had consented to: had allegedly taken the stronger action because of an injudicious sentence in Darling's reply: but what was the real significance of the recall? The wealthy Melbourne landowners and importers did not like the new tariff, which showed germs of Protectionist ideas. Weren't the British interests that Cardwell represented moved by the same feeling? Through the influence of David Syme and the *Age*, the Victorian masses were becoming intent on a policy of building up secondary industries. The land was largely locked up: there was little alluvial gold left in the creeks and gullies: were they to be prevented from manufacturing their own goods because universal Free Trade benefited England's industrial north?

There were some grounds for their suspicion that the question was not merely an abstract one. During the height of the controversy Governor Darling was informed by the Secretary of State that His Majesty's Government would "sincerely regret" any change of fiscal policy in the direction of Protection. And only those who believe that foreign policy

is directed by mysterious ultra-mundane principles could imagine that the matter of limiting a colonial market could have no interest for imperial statesmen. As for the local Upper House, its economic interests were well known. Even Sir Frederick Rogers of the Colonial Office referred scathingly to it. In a minute on the dispatch of 26 October 1867, he observed that "in its present composition" it was a body that ought never to have existed, for it was "a mere close oligarchy or squattocracy founded on no historical associations or extended sound influence, but merely on the accidental possession of wealth of a particular kind."

But Higinbotham had less interest in the tariff-proposals than in the abstract principle: whether the people had, in fact, gained through the Constitution the power to govern themselves through their appointed ministers. It was not merely a legal matter. He was afraid that their privileges, so recently acquired, might be frittered away in conflicts between classes or through sheer indifference to their historical value.

"If we were a united people," he said, "bound to the soil and the constitution of the country, I should not care what opinion the Secretary of State held."

But that, he persisted, was not the case. The matter of local government was endangered because there were powerful individuals and classes in the country who would willingly sacrifice its rights for their own interests.

"I believe at this moment—and I hope I do them no injustice—that the Melbourne merchants would gladly purchase a continuance of their importing monopoly by the surrender of our civil government. I believe the pastoral classes would gladly, on the same terms, effect the defeat of our agricultural interests."

These were the charges he threw at his opponents when the House met to move a grant of £20,000 to the departing Governor—a grant, by the way, that, since it could not be accepted by Darling, was transferred to his wife. They show, thus early, the extent with which Higinbotham had identified himself with the country of his adoption. Its future had begun to arouse his imagination just as its right to self-govern-

ment stirred his feelings. Politically this had made him move away from what he called the "wealthy lower orders," the floating class of people who had been the country's first exploiters, but whose attachment to it was a mere matter of cupboard love. His contempt for them was shown when, in 1869, it was proposed to hold a conference in London on the relation between the Australian colonies and the British Empire. There was nothing definitely official about the conference: it was summoned, not by the British Government of the day, but by certain important *émigrés* who had obviously the ear of the Secretary of State. Who were these persons? asked Higinbotham. Wherein did their authority lie?

"They are men who have abandoned their duty to the country to which they owe their prosperity. And it appears to me a surprising and marvellous thing that persons should take up a permanent residence in a foreign country and then venture to ask the people of the country from which they came, and which they have deserted, to surrender into their hands the government and legislation on fundamental matters which belong to that people."

The answer of the Assembly was the passing of five resolutions, affirming the principle of self-government, the first resolution declining to "sanction or recognize" a conference proposed to be held in London, at the instance of a "self-constituted and irresponsible body of colonists."

"Melbourne is the seat of government of this country," said Higinbotham, "not London."

And it is easy to see his hand in the framing of the resolutions, which caused a flutter in the Colonial Office at the time. To some of the highly-paid officials (the urbane but authority-loving Sir Frederick Rogers was one of them) Higinbotham seemed a subversive agitator, hostile to everything British. Even Governor Sir George Bowen, while admitting that he was a gentleman of the highest character, with many admirable qualities, added that "those qualities make him all the more dangerous as a demagogue in stormy times."

Yet Higinbotham was the reverse of a demagogue. He had little oratorical power: he made no attempt to stir crowds. All his statements were the considered ones of a cool-headed lawyer who took his stand on the terms of the Constitution Act. He was convinced that the Victorian people had been given certain liberties by this Act that were liable to be whittled away. He did not claim full independence for Victoria. He was disturbed by the readiness with which other politicians could think of annexing neighbouring territories without the sanction of the British Government. Such actions seemed to him sheer irresponsibility, the promptings of people politically immature. They were only justified if the country were willing to "accept the responsibility of complete independence" and submit to be disannexed from the parent State. And since he did not desire this himself he was content that the Governor should act in a dual capacity, partly as a representative of "imperial interests." To this extent he had no objection to the Royal Instructions. But in purely local affairs the Governor was not an agent of Downing Street but a vice-regent of the Queen, and, as such, bound to abide by the advice of his Ministers.

Where the Royal Instructions over-rode the terms of the Constitution Act, Higinbotham contended, they were illegal. It is true that modern authorities do not support him in this.

"Higinbotham was as wrong," says Mr Justice Evatt, "in asserting the illegality of the Instructions to the Governor, as he was obviously right in calling attention to their extraordinarily autocratic character, and to the culpable inattention of all Australian Governments to the question of their continuance in full."

So the strength of Higinbotham's position, throughout his life, does not lie in the correctness of his view of the Constitution Act, but in his grasp of the importance of such liberties as it contained. He was a political adult living in a society that was largely adolescent. For often the men who fought on his side, the radical politicians of the day, did not realize the nature of self-government: the responsibilities and limitations it imposed as well as the freedoms it granted. They

were ready to parade their dignity and independence when it advantaged them, but to sacrifice it if there was a chance of scoring off opponents. When, for instance, in 1878 Sir Graham Berry (the fiery little Cockney democrat) found himself in conflict with the Legislative Council he conceived the brilliant idea of going to England to persuade the Colonial Office to clip the Council's wings!

Higinbotham was by that time out of Parliament—he had been beaten by Bent, a local market-gardener—but such actions raised his political hackles. They were typical of the "colonialism" against which he had always fought. He could not freely breathe this atmosphere of colonialism himself, and he was afraid of its corrupting effect on the country. A disposition to recklessness on the part of politicians in international affairs for which they were not responsible: to timidity in home-affairs for which they were. There was a danger that the young people growing up would accept a position of inferiority—a position that would affect their lives as citizens, limiting them mainly to the money-grubbing activities in which they were free, and infecting them with an inner degradation. All around him he could see the unhappy effect of political dependence on his own generation, or the one before. They were lions in Toorak, these speculators and wealthy land-jobbers: they were cringing small-fry in London, hunting tufts, as he said, in the neighbourhood of the Palace Hotel, Westminster, or achieving the proudest moment of their lives when they were permitted to sit down to a subscription-dinner at the London Tavern with half a dozen English noblemen.

He himself, though he nowhere hinted at the contrast, had entirely opposite habits and impulses. In his daily life he was democratic and unobtrusive. He could yarn to old women in a Brighton bus or stop in the street to give some teamster a leg-up on the draughthorse he was leading. But when he spoke in the name of the people he took on himself the pride and dignity of his office. Especially when he was talking to or about the Colonial Office, a department whose authority

he denied. There was its chief clerk, "a person named Rogers": there was Lord Lyveden its former chief:

"Lord Lyveden is a new nobleman. He formerly, under the name of Mr Vernon Smith—which, it is believed, he very painfully endured—was Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies. I remember it was said to be the ambition of Mr Vernon Smith to change his patronymic. I believe that any person who has either seen or heard Mr Vernon Smith will not be curious to learn the opinion of Lord Lyveden on any subject of human interest."

These two sides of him, the modest but lively human being and the austere office-holder, were just as marked when he left politics and sat upon the Bench. He was rigid about procedure in Court, sternly rebuking a witness who stood with his hands in his pockets, and insisting on respect being paid to his high office. And, though he refused a knighthood, he stayed away from a public dinner because the Speaker of the House was to take precedence of the Chief Justice. But, deep within him, was the democrat who lived in hopes of social justice: who revelled, as he confessed to an English visitor, in the growing solidarity of Labour, and believed in its future. When, in 1890, the great maritime strike took place, and the Employers' Union refused the Trades Hall Council's request for a conference, he forsook the traditional aloofness of the Bench and wrote:

"The Chief Justice presents his compliments to the President of the Trades Hall Council, and requests that he will be so good as to place the amount of the enclosed cheque of £50 to the credit of the strike fund. While the United Trades are awaiting compliance with their reasonable request for a conference with the employers, the Chief Justice will continue for the present to forward a weekly contribution of £10 to the same object."

What were the qualities of Higinbotham that make us feel he was, in reality, a great man? Certain definite achievements stand to his credit. Through a considered report (asked for by Sir Henry Holland, then Secretary of State for the Colonies) he was instrumental in getting the Royal Instruc-

tions modernized, thus making the governor a symbolic figure rather than an executive officer of the British Government. Seventy years before the Statute of Westminster he defined the position of free citizenship under the Crown. And there was his solid work in the consolidation of Victorian law, a labour of many years, for which he was publicly thanked by Parliament.

But the creative part of him did not flower in a few acts. He was an inspiration to the young men of his time—Deakin, Higgins, Isaacs, Garran—and there is a vivifying heat in him that is not yet exhausted. The words of his speeches live today among a mass of dead matter. In spite of an occasional stiffness of form he speaks to us with an intimacy that makes it hard to believe he belonged to a generation of politicians (parochial-minded, bound by their day) whose frock-coated images it seems so inevitable to reproduce in bronze. Higinbotham had an air of nobility about him: even his enemies admitted that: but he wore it easily. He was the old Athenian, the democrat who did not mind the jostling in the market-place, but drew pride from the soil beneath him when he stood up in the name of the people.

The historians, in spite of their preoccupation with politics and personalities rather than large social movements, have not been kind to him. Rusden in the *History of Australia* describes him as a "theoretical democrat, steeped in a mixture of the ideas of John Stuart Mill and the French iconoclasts of 1789." Professor Scott is even less impressed with his importance. There are only two brief references to him in *A Shorter History of Australia*, one of which passes him out in half a line as "McCulloch's pugnacious Attorney-General."

It is certain that the historians of a century hence will have a different perspective.

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THE BOTANIST

Ferdinand von Mueller

Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, C.M.G., M. and Ph.D., F.R.S., Government Botanist, in one of his enormous speeches, crammed with botanical fervour, and with practical and commercial ideas on such matters as the intelligent afforestation of the globe, closes by half apologizing for "these concise and somewhat chaotic suggestions." To present them fully and systematically, he says, would demand a whole book. This was one of the many books he was never to write, for all his sixteen hours' working day.

Yet it sometimes happens that a man in some single phrase reveals himself rather than what he is discussing: "concise and somewhat chaotic" would perhaps describe the lifework of this impassioned, forward-looking scientist. "Concise" because life itself is short, and everything must be abridged: "chaotic" because of the man's sheer fertility, his agile imagination conceiving of a world regenerated by lovely and above all serviceable plants, a humanity fed and healed by all that those plants bear.

Born in 1825, of Danish parents but in Mecklenberg-Schwerin, Ferdinand Mueller had a German training, which remained his chief influence. Studying at the University of Kiel, he took his Doctorate of Philosophy at twenty-one. He made a collection of the flora of Schleswig-Holstein, and attended in 1846 the meeting of the German Society for the Advancement of Science. His real interests were already clear. The medical career he once planned was abandoned without a trace when, for reasons of health (his parents and a sister died of tuberculosis), he and his remaining sisters decided to go abroad to a warmer climate.

It was in 1847, the year before the Year of Revolutions, and many Germans were going as colonists to Australia. If Mueller ever thought of his emigration as temporary, this was soon settled for him by the outbreak of hostilities between Germany and Denmark in Schleswig-Holstein: he never returned. In Adelaide he found employment with a German chemist, Henzenroder. Somehow he made time to go exploring for South Australian flora in many directions, including the Flinders Range, Lake Torrens and the Murray Scrubs. He was strengthened in body and enriched in mind: not a crumb of learning or experience was wasted. Already he was sending plants and notes to Sir Richard Hooker, botanist at Kew Gardens. For awhile he tried life as a farmer with his sister in a mountain cottage, but he returned to city employment. In 1850 and 1851 he published articles on the Murray Scrubs in two German newspapers that had sprung up in South Australia. In 1852 he wrote advocating a new search for Leichhardt, alive or dead. He never lost his concern for the fate of Leichhardt, his predecessor as German botanist in Australia: for—as his own letters show—the indomitable Leichhardt was always more concerned with finding plants than with exploration for its own sake.

Mueller in 1852 left Adelaide for Melbourne. His reasons were two at least. First, the outbreak of the gold-fever in Victoria, which meant opportunity, Sir Richard Hooker having recommended him to Governor Latrobe, who had decided on a site for Botanical Gardens; and, second, his deep scientific curiosity about Victorian plants. To what extent did Tasmanian vegetation extend into the mainland? And when that had ceased, what was farther north? In fact, Mueller always wanted to know what was round the next corner, and it is fortunate that Australia—"that fine, immense island," as Hooker called it—was ultimately limited by being an island. Nothing less than the whole "Flora Australiensis" was Mueller's objective.

In Melbourne, then, he was installed by Latrobe in 1853 as Victorian Government Botanist, a post he was to hold, with variations, till his death in 1897. The chief variation

was that from 1857 to 1873 he was not only Botanist but Director of the Botanical Gardens. At all times, though, he took his work as Botanist with great seriousness and followed where it led him—this frail Europeon leaving his little home between Government House and the River Yarra and exploring unknown Victoria alone, his first excursion (on horseback and leading a packhorse) covering fifteen hundred miles. He found traces of Tasmanian vegetation as far north as the Glenelg River.

"The travels of the Government Botanist," wrote the Baron in 1887, still using his inveterate German constructions, "commenced in Victoria early in 1853, when the country from Port Phillip to the Ovens River was phytographically examined, when the Buffalo Range for the first time was ascended, when from the summit of Mount Buller the first truly Alpine plants were secured for Australian botany, when Gippsland was traversed, the return journey being effected along the coast, then widely roadless and uninhabited. The remarkable plurality of Eucalypts within the territory of Victoria became then accurately known, and their forestral and sanitary importance foreseen. All this was accomplished with slender resources, while the hostility of the savages was still extreme."

So the Government Botanist, looking back, writes respectfully and frankly of the Government Botanist: and well he might. A few years later than this excursion Labillière was to call Dr Mueller "the *last* explorer of Victoria": he had left so little for others to do. As for the plurality of eucalypts he mentions, already in 1852 Mueller associated himself with the experiments of a manufacturing chemist in Melbourne, Bosisto, in the production of eucalyptus oils—this was for their febrifuge reactions or "sanitary importance"—while at the same time he was forwarding eucalyptus seeds all over the world. The plantations he initiated, especially in swampy and malarial regions, such as the Roman Campagna, have changed the character of such places and kept them healthy ever since.

Continuing his solitary expeditions through mountain snow

or summer heat, finding drought-resisting trees like the kurrajong, amazed by the mostly "tropical vegetation" of the Snowy River country, he was impressed in general by "the geniality of the climate and the capability of the soil," Victoria alone having a flora twice as great as that of Britain. His time at home in Melbourne was divided between the scientific planning and developing of the Gardens themselves and his constant labours in the herbarium: tasks that in his mind at least were not widely divergent, as will be seen. As years went on he trained workers in the herbarium and did his own work in his home—a happy arrangement, for it was not only his expedition-horses that were expected to be as devoted to botany and as laborious as himself: he invited sixteen hours a day from his human assistants. Besides his constant work at classification and forwarding specimens abroad, he kept up a vast correspondence, in his own hand, with fellow scientists in all countries. For many years the handling of the Government Botanist's inward and outward mail was a task in itself, stories gathering round the gape-mouthed green carpet-bag so embarrassing to the young assistant who carried it. As for the inward mail, it was placed in a huge box set up specially in Collins Street.

It is a calamity that much of the Mueller papers and correspondence was burned, either at his death or later. Enough of his own letters remain for his style to be remembered with a little admiration and amusement. There would be the opening, "Much pleased was I, dear Mrs X, by your letter," and "Without wishing to be intrusive, dear Mr C., I like to mention" (follows a request for certain seeds in season). The body of the letter, verbose yet exact, contained invented words he persisted in all his life: "educt, ephemerous, richdome"; and omitted nothing relevant to his topic. The conclusion was nearly always, "Regardfully yours."

Fortunately one great group of inward letters has survived: the letters of the Hookers, botanists father and son, and of George Bentham, another distinguished English botanist associated with them. If no personal memories or professional

records had been preserved, Mueller's life as botanist could almost be reconstructed from these letters alone.

It was not smooth. Devoted to his immense tasks, he is said to have twice contemplated marriage and twice decided against it, for the sake of his work. This was only one way in which he chose to simplify his life. Cleared for action—for instance, never possessing a watch or a mirror—he had many problems left. The first became fairly evident early in the Hooker-Bentham correspondence. Was he or was he not to produce the definitive work on Australian vegetation, *Flora Australiensis*, to be published by authority in England? He was obviously preparing himself for this, not being content with his close, early knowledge of Victorian flora but going much farther afield. For instance, as early as 1857 he went with Gregory on the strenuous north-west expedition, Mueller the most laborious of them all. Hooker hoped he would visit England after that, to compare his collection with those made by former English and French naturalists in Australia. The results of Mueller's field-work were very full and fresh, Hooker said, but added that he had better join the Linnaean Society; "working as you do, you have evidently no idea of the time and care it takes to turn out satisfactory botanical work." Still, "No one is now nearly so well qualified as you are to publish an Australian Flora and nobody else can do it at all." That was hopeful enough.

Then something went wrong. For reasons unstated, Mueller did not go to England on return from the Gregory expedition. Perhaps he had found, what he had half anticipated, only a scanty flora in the dry north; perhaps the Government would not grant him leave to spend, as he had agreed, "two winters and a summer" on the existing collections in Europe. At any rate he stayed in Melbourne, was given the standing of Director of the Gardens at £1000 a year, and evidently considered *Flora Australiensis* as a task for his next many years. This he was to undertake, but only in a secondary capacity: the venerable George Bentham, the English botanist (a man of great repute and skill, but of course quite without field experience) was given the long task,

the work to be issued in many parts, with Mueller's name on the title-page, but much farther down, as that of assistant.

Before and after bowing his head to this ruling, Mueller allowed himself a few rebellious kicks. Why must the work be undertaken so early? Because Bentham was elderly? Why could not Bentham have devoted himself to the flora of Africa or India, countries equally unknown to him? At one stage Hooker rebuked Mueller for this attitude: "Mr Bentham is a very sensitive gentleman, devoting himself to Botany from his private income . . ." Yet it may be suggested that Mr Bentham's sensitiveness was chiefly for his own use. For instance, European and British honours were accumulating upon Mueller: by 1868 he was ennobled—later on hereditary Baron of Wurtemberg—and he had honorary degrees from all directions. F.R.S. in 1859, he was now C.M.G. How was he to be named, in his secondary position on the title-page of *Flora Australiensis*? An English publication, it seemed, could not recognize German signs of nobility, and Bentham wrote:

"I hope you are not particular about the *von*. . . . On observing that the Colonial Office do not give it to you, and enquiring there, we are told that in giving you the Commandership of St Michael and St George, they advisedly omitted the *von*, which is not English. For my own part, I attach no value whatever to such things."

In spite of such cheerful British patronage, Bentham won the respect of Mueller, who for many years gave him "what may fairly be claimed as an unabating co-operation of my own." Yet he knew (and the younger Hooker was not slow in reminding him) that, compared with the intensive work he was doing on Victorian native plants, *Flora Australiensis* would, at best, be an imperfect sketch.

Mueller's second disappointment lay at home. As Director of the Botanical Gardens he considered himself responsible for disseminating scientific knowledge for practical purposes among the community. Lecturing on "Rust in Cereals" in 1865, he suggested that "there should be a Professor for Chemistry Allied to Agriculture in our rising University. Send for a Liebig man. Let him lecture not only to the

University, but freely to the agricultural community." The Gardens, he felt, being similarly practical in function, ought to provide for horticulturists; but not ten years after he became Director, there began to be raised a public outcry against his direction. Journalists described the gardens as a scientific wilderness "of strange plants and Latin names"; and they were supported by many distinguished visitors, including Anthony Trollope. Taking up the challenge, Mueller in 1871 lectured on "The Objects of Botanical Gardens in Relation to Industries" and said that it had been precisely his object to bring together the greatest number of select plants from all the different parts of the globe, and to make it easy for people to recognize them:

"It is an aim to excite a due interest in the general study and ample utilization of any living forms of vegetation or of important substances derived therefrom. All other objects are secondary, or the institution ceases to be a real garden of science."

This garden of science, he hopefully thought, should be greatly enlarged, to cross the river and refresh the crowded suburbs of Richmond and Collingwood.

But he was not to keep control of the Gardens. Though Hooker from London hinted that a mixture of tact and compromise might enable him to weather the storm, he was not adept at either. With all the international recognition of his work as Botanist, he was bewildered to find himself, in 1873, no longer Director, but only, as before 1857, Government Botanist. His salary was still the same, but he saw with chagrin that the former starvation allowance for the Gardens was greatly increased as soon as his successor—Mr J. R. Guilfoyle, of Sydney—took charge. It had long been complained that Melbourne's gardens were far less beautiful than Sydney's. Now under Guilfoyle's gradual scheme for creating gentle idyllic scenes—the gardens being paved with banknotes, as someone said—the comparison was reversed.

It was bitter indeed for the Baron to have to listen to such comments. He never set foot in the Gardens again, although his herbarium was on their border. He practically forbade

his assistants to enter them, either. Incapable of seeing that the public grievance against his stiff "garden of science" was genuine, he never ceased to regard the appointment of Guilfoyle as sheer nepotism and corruption. As for the herbarium, botanists say it was cramped, comfortless, stuffy, inadequate, unworthy of the great scientist; but the Baron was able to concentrate on it, and in 1887 he was to write that it was "now on a par with the few really grand herbaria anywhere in existence, the whole arranged by a system effected as the result of studies through nearly half-a-century by the originator of the institution."

And about the same date, in a preface to what he regarded as a slight little work on Victorian plants, he wrote:

"The author of the present unpretensive volume (which is written under singular disadvantages after the disruption of his department) has endeavoured by the sacrifices of almost everything else in life to bear honourably also his share in the elucidation of the Australian flora."

Almost everything else in life? It was the truth.

Satisfying, crowded days remained to him, though he never disguised his grievances. Working at his house near by, he liked to clump about in French sabots and loose clothes, often augmented by a fabulous and unwhite muffler, survival of the days when he had a right to consider himself delicate. As a mark of favour he would thrust the loan of this muffler on a visitor if the day seemed chilly. For, busy as he was, he would receive visitors and inquiries as part of his function. He was a great functionary—the second citizen in Victoria, while governors came and went. He attended important concerts, his insignia often hidden under the inevitable muffler. A man of music as well as a botanist, the Baron appears in a significant chapter of Henry Handel Richardson's *Ultima Thule* which shows him as a "short, sturdy little man, bronzed with the sun, dark of hair and beard, and with a kindly pair of eyes that beamed at you from behind large gold spectacles. Veteran colonist as he was, he still spoke a jargon of his own, coupled with a thick, foreign accent; . . . and could he

not at once find the word he sought, he paused in what he was saying and scoured his mind until he captured it."

The Baron's public addresses were events, his occasions as chairman rather calamitous, the enthusiastic opening remarks (as on one famous occasion when he took the chair for Stanley, the explorer) being apt to take up the speaker's whole time. His name appeared on all lists of charitable donors. A friend once questioning the real need for this, he said simply: "I must; it is necessary: I am a nobleman." Nobleman or scientist, it is unquestioned that during his career he spent £20,000 of his own savings on science.

His purely botanical work being for specialists, it was as a citizen that he sometimes addressed the public. There were not only his reports on scientific exhibits, with his enthusiasm for oils distilled from native trees, melaleuca, eucalypts, banksia: there were also his more general addresses—on the opening of the Philosophical Society (1860), on the possible fate of Leichhardt (1865), on the development of rural industries (1880). Again and again he expressed his enthusiasm for the Australian vegetation. Wasn't it possible that we possessed in these tough trees, these drought-resisting shrubs, the means of obliterating the rainless zones, not only of our own continent, but of the globe?

"Even the rugged escarpments of the desolate ranges of Tunis, Algiers, Morocco, might become wooded; fertility might be secured again to the Holy Land; or timber and fuel be furnished to Natal and La Plata."

It is easy to smile at his universal enthusiasms; better to remind ourselves that a percentage of his tireless ideas were accepted and bore fruit. His name is written, selflessly and scientifically, throughout the flora of Australia, and as a practical botanist, believing devoutly in the beneficence of plants, he left his mark in all directions. Against sand-drift on the southern coasts he introduced marram grass; for dairying country paspalum, that tough, lush grass that has been of such benefit to farmers. He suggested, and not without some result, that "in sheltered glens" families could grow Chinese tea, Peruvian bark, senna, cork, perhaps even coffee; and

work at the "artless distillation of essential oils." Realizing that the gold-bearing period of Australia Felix was over, he urged the consistent development of food-supplies, with the necessary irrigation. He encouraged particularly the planting of *pinus insignis* on the bare landscapes of provincial towns—this being only a fragment of the forestry he practised and preached for the whole of Australia.

If his dreams have not all come true nor his injunctions been steadily followed, it is not through any lack in the Baron's zeal and industry. "Triumph through Time and Truth": Haendel—that was what he printed on the title-page of his *Native Plants of Victoria.* It was upon a world like another Eden in the making that his indefatigable gaze was set.

THE PASTORALIST

Robert Christison

ONE night in 1863, on the Sutton River, a young man travelling about the unknown ranges with his packhorses was surprised to see a camp-fire, and, riding over to it, found it was that of Landsborough, the explorer, then on a journey to the north. The young man was looking for land on which to found a station. He had examined the coastal country and had found it unsuitable for sheep: there was little herbage, and the grass, when dry, lost most of its nourishment. Though Leichhardt had been enthusiastic about these lands along the Burdekin when he had passed through nearly twenty years before on his Port Essington expedition, he had hardly looked at them with the eye of a pastoralist. There were luxuriant patches of tropical soil: there were few open stretches fit for grazing. But would there be any water, the young man wondered, on the unoccupied plains and saltbush country farther inland?

"If you can find the tree that I marked ↑, 22 March 1862, when I led the Burke and Wills Search Expedition," Landsborough told him, "you will find a creek that I marked Tower Hill Creek, with waterholes in it large enough to float the *Great Britain*."

The imagination of the young man, Robert Christison, was excited. He had always had a dream of exploring new country. A little while before he had applied to go as a scout with the Burke and Wills Expedition, and when unsuccessful had made a journey up to the head of the Warrego alone. He had read Landsborough's account of his search for the lost explorers, and had a whole-hearted admiration for this matter-of-fact bushman who put on none of the airs of

a romantic adventurer. They pored over charts all evening, in the light of the camp-fire, and in the morning young Christison rode off to find the El Dorado of which Landsborough had spoken.

Going west over the Dividing Range, from where Townsville is now, one reaches a point where the streams diverge, running in different directions over the continent. The most unimaginative man could not fail to get a thrill here. Some of the creeks starting at this spot ultimately join the Diamantina and other so-called rivers that either feed the Darling or spread out in flood-time over the sandy belts of the interior, making the herbage shoot amazingly in country that rarely knows rain. A few miles away they may turn north, running through lily-lagoons and patches of cane-grass, and finally reaching the grey waters of the Gulf. Again they may fall eastward to the Pacific, moving swiftly down the steep slope, then sluggishly through scrubs of maple, cedar, myrtle and palm till they empty themselves into the Barrier waters. The spot is an eyrie from which it is easy to get the whole of Australia in perspective.

But Christison was moving west over the empty Mitchell-grass tableland that stretched unbrokenly for nearly a thousand miles, except where a mineral belt cut transversely across, a high wedge of metallic country, fifty miles by a couple of hundred, thrust up from the dark earth. He found (near where the township of Hughenden now stands) the tree Landsborough had marked, and decided to set up his homestead near by. Yet how was he to make a living in this new territory he had occupied? He had only his packhorses and some scant savings.

The Land Act of 1860 had laid it down that "any person may apply for an occupation licence for one year for a run of one hundred square miles" with the proviso that within nine months from the granting of the licence, "the occupier must make application for a fourteen years' lease, conditionally on having stocked the run to one-fourth of its assumed carrying capacity of one hundred sheep, or twenty head of cattle, to the square mile." Christison lost no time in riding to the

coast to make his title secure; and then applied himself to the question of finding stock. If he could not fulfil the provisions of the Act within the stipulated time his newly-acquired land would be forfeited; and there were already other men moving out towards these empty downs, inspired by what Landsborough had written about them. Luckily he met a man, Adam, driving a small flock of sheep in search of country: in search, too, of a partner in his enterprise. A bargain was struck: Christison to supply the land, Adam the stock. So, in a fashion typical of the times, was founded Lammermoor, one of the great stations of the north, and the settlement of a new tract of rich pastoral country was begun.

It was begun, necessarily, in uncertainty and privation. The business of getting food-supplies from the coast was difficult, even if funds had been available. And it was just as hard to find markets for sheep and cattle. A settler had to make up his mind to live on the country, to adjust himself to it in much the same way as the blacks did. There were fish in the creeks, game to be run down with dogs, and portulacca to be used in salads. Perhaps a little flour could be hoarded in the stores if it were sieved regularly through sacking to keep it from the weevils. But all money from chance sales of stock must be saved to buy tools for the building, teams and drays for transport. The working-capital of the place could only be gathered by a slow process of accumulation.

Like most of his fellow-settlers Christison had trouble with the blacks, but he had imagination enough to see himself through their eyes, sufficient humanity to shrink from the usual policy of bloody reprisals when sheep were killed. He was the invader, taking possession of the waterhole that had been their camping-place for generations: wasn't it his place to make explanations and overtures for peace? The trouble was that he had no means of communication with them; they scattered at his approach. Driven to exasperation Christison rode down a lusty young fellow one day and brought him bound to the homestead. There he kept him in captivity, treating him with humour and kindness till the black's fears were dissipated, and gradually they learnt a little of each

other's language. At last the captive, loaded with presents, was sent back to the tribe, bearing the white man's message of goodwill:

"You and me sit down two fellow messmate. Country belonga you: sheep belonga me."

This rather naïve statement of the position was successful. Barney, the black boy, came back, bringing his tribe with him, to be a source of strength to the station, a reserve of casual labour, a defence against wandering marauders.

But prospects of immediate success were not bright for the two partners. Christison banked on the future, but the hardships were too much for Adam. No ultimate fortune, he felt, would compensate him for the ruined health that would be his fate through poor food, overwork, and the fever which was endemic in the Gulf country till the myriad hoofs of sheep had stamped the surface hard. Christison managed to pay him his share in the venture and let him go, bringing up his own brothers from the south and inspiring them with his enthusiasm.

The stories of most pioneering enterprises in pastoral country are alike. Flocks gradually increase; neighbours appear and arrangements are made for shearing each other's sheep; the log-hut with its loopholes for rifles is supplemented by yards and outbuildings, and the fugitive camp at a waterhole takes on an air of stability and permanence. So it was with Lammermoor. Before many years had passed, the track Christison had made over three hundred miles to the coast, blazing trees every few miles, had become a coach-route—"Christison's track." A thin stream of settlement was pouring over the northern tablelands.

It was helped greatly by the discovery of gold in the ranges along the coast. There had been a small find at the head of the Cape River in the late sixties, but more important developments were ahead. There was a rush to Ravenswood in seventy-one, to Charters Towers in seventy-two, to the Palmer in seventy-three. Small townships were springing up, and a market for beef being established. This did much to balance the poor seasons and the low price for wool. Christison took

up a new section of country, Cameron Downs, for his sheep, and began to stock Lammermoor with cattle. He had given as much study to the virtues of the different breeds of cattle as John Macarthur had seventy years before to those of sheep: he had noticed that Devons and red-polled cattle throve well on mixed country, with loamy flats and stony hills; for their good feet and energy led them to browse in places inaccessible to shorthorns. But best of all were the Herefords, with their sturdy vigour and their great development of chest and hindquarters. His main purpose was to find the breed that would thrive best on his own particular land, and to fix it by careful selection:

"Assist and work hand in hand with nature, and we shall succeed: but go against her laws and labour is lost."

Lammermoor already was becoming known as one of the great stations of the north: it was an outpost not merely of settlement but of civilization. To the stranger, driving towards it across the plains, it had the appearance of a village. The original log hut was now used as a store: it had been replaced by a solid house with wide verandas, built from the hard timber of the country. Around it were the buildings necessary to its life, the meat-house, the stone dairy, the saddle-room, the smithy, the carpenter's and saddler's workshops. A little farther away sprawled the men's quarters and the huts of the blacks, while the background was filled with cattle-yards and loose-boxes. In ten years a centre of busy life had been created. Nor was it, like many such homes, entirely isolated from the outer world. Christison, a man of definite intellectual interests, must have his books. "Seldom did he enter the dining-room," says his daughter, "without an instinctive glance of affection at his bush library, ranged along the top shelf level with his eyes: Ferguson's *Surgery*, the Bible and Shakespeare, Bell's *Life* and Macaulay's *Essays*, Goulburn's *Personal Religion*, the *Pickwick Papers*, Milton and Prescott, books on astronomy, a life of Napoleon, Southey's *Nelson*, the diaries of Leichhardt, Sturt, Mitchell, Eyre, Landsborough, and MacKinlay (later of Warburton), numbers of the *Stock and Station Journal*, and the *Stock-*

breeder." And, in his rare periods of leisure, he wrote down notes about the country, and his own experiences in the breeding of stock.

A station, as it grows, necessarily creates a feudal atmosphere about it. The pioneer becomes a patriarch, and the few years of development have been so marked by changes that he and others can look down them as through a long perspective of history. A vague loyalty is generated, partly to the place, partly to the pioneer himself. Such early employees as have clung to their jobs become old retainers, taking pride in the station and being ready to defend its honour: though they may vary in caste and special privileges, from the overseer dominating the men's quarters to the blacks wolfing their meals on the outskirts of the kitchen and sleeping among their dogs. In the golden age of the pastoral industry, while the tradition of docile convict-labour still lasted, this atmosphere of feudalism was comparatively easy to establish. The blacks were rooted to the waterholes that had been their camping-places from time immemorial: white men tended to take root, too, when they found a comfortable home. They identified themselves with their particular station as a patriot with his country. The boss was venerated as a chief: the dignity of armorial bearings accrued to the station-brand.

Christison, with his picturesque looks, his dash, his generous temper, was definitely suited to the part of local chieftain. He could touch men's imaginations and fill them with the belief that the building-up of Lammermoor was an impersonal task, one in which they were all privileged to share. To the blacks he was an object of awe and affection. Barney, the boy he had ridden down and chained to the posts of the veranda till he learnt a few words of his strange tongue, became his devoted slave, gradually growing old in his service.

"I firmly believe that Barney would die for me or any one belonging to me," Christison used to say.

Rich, expansive days were coming for the pioneers of the north. Gold-mining was booming at Charters Towers and other places along the coast, and the wealth of the tropical sugar-lands was being tapped. The loan-money, sought by

McIlwraith, the Premier, was pouring into Queensland. Large, exuberant, powerful, McIlwraith typified the new spirit of capitalist enterprise that was spreading through the country. He was fertile in schemes for its quick exploitation. There was his plan for building a land-grant railway from Charleville to the Gulf that would open up the western pastoral country: he forced through the House an agreement with the British India Company for a monthly first-class mail-service between Brisbane and London, calling at all the chief ports of the north; he was ready to spend money on harbours, roads, the subsidizing of meat-companies. There was something contagious about McIlwraith's gusto for development, his sanguine outlook, his capacity for bold, imaginative action. Even to a sardonic observer like Francis Adams he seemed different from the niggling politicians of the day. And he had an ideal foil in the dry, legalistic Griffith, then a radical of the English non-conformist school.

The effect of the new expansive spirit on Christison was to turn his thoughts to the problem of building up a frozen-beef industry in the north that would give the pastoralists a permanent market for their stock. He had been interested in the question ever since 1861, when Thomas Mort had established at Darling Harbour the first freezing-works in the world: but the experiment conducted then, of shipping beef to England, had proved a failure. The ammonia compression refrigerating machinery, successful on land, had been unable to cope with the difficulties of a long sea-voyage, and Harrison, the inventor of the first freezing-machine, had lost all his savings in his experiments. But there were others trying to evolve a new freezing process, compressing the air, cooling it with water, and re-expanding it in the beef-chambers. In 1880 a cargo of beef and mutton, frozen by such a process, was landed in London in good condition.

This opened up fresh prospects to Australian pastoralists, particularly to those isolated by distance from the markets of the cities. Very often, in times of glut, they had been forced to send their prime bullocks to the wasteful boiling-down works, for even such tinned-beef industries as existed were

being ruined because American exporters had found a way of sending their product to Europe on ice. Now the Australian pastoralists had a vision of a stable and inexhaustible market for all the cattle they could breed. But there were still difficulties in the way. Who could provide the capital to establish an industry that was, as yet, in the experimental stage? Could costs be brought down low enough to make it pay? Would shipping-companies be willing to take the risk of installing the necessary machinery?

Christison, certain of the ultimate success of the industry, was ready to sacrifice his own immediate concerns to put it on its feet. On a visit to England, in 1880, he did his best to interest capital in the venture: he interviewed shipowners, wrote letters to the press about the pastoral wealth of North Queensland, enlisted the support of McIlwraith. The result was the formation of the Australian Company, with a former Lord Mayor of London as its chairman of directors, Christison consenting to become the Queensland manager for three years. The object of the company was to preserve and import food-stuffs frozen, and Christison went home to enlist the co-operation of his fellow-pastoralists and to seek out a site for his freezing-works, which he ultimately found at Poole Island, near Bowen.

Alas, the ill-luck that dogs new enterprises hovered at the heels of the Poole Island experiment from the beginning. The London directors became doubtful about the possibility of establishing freezing-works in a tropical climate. They were slow in sending the machinery, and when it did arrive it was accompanied by a thoroughly incompetent engineer. There were delays and readjustments. Boats that had arranged to take the first shipments were diverted to other routes, and beef which should have been frozen had to be rendered down into tallow. When at last everything was in working order, the final disaster came. One of the fiercest cyclones ever known in the north swept over Poole Island, beating up enormous seas, wrecking the jetty and freezing-works, and pounding the mainland port of Bowen to pieces.

It was a severe blow to Christison, for he had put more than

capital into the venture; but he could retire to Lammermoor in the knowledge that foundations had been laid on which others could build with success. Already other freezing-works were being established in ports along the coast. Meanwhile he had to think about his two stations, his growing family, the old problem of improving his stock. A drought was beginning to scourge the pastoral country, and it raised the question of permanent supplies of water. Christison had often pondered on the large tracts of grassed country that were unoccupied, or partly so, because of the lack of surface-water: what became of the heavy rains that fell on the western slopes of the Dividing Range during the monsoonal season? Did they seep through the porous strata and spread, forming underground reservoirs? And if the impermeable clay of the plains were pierced, would they spout up and make the richly-grassed waste available to large numbers of stock? He began to sink bores in promising spots, and though unsuccessful in striking artesian water that reached the surface he tapped supplies that could be worked with pumps. Later, through machinery more suitable to the country, the underground reservoir was to be tapped in countless places, and the face of the west changed by a perennial artesian flow that, if it did not abolish the old-time fear of drought, made it less of a calamity.

But by now there were beginning to rise the first faint mutterings of a social war that was soon to be waged all over Australia, and with peculiar bitterness in the pastoral districts of Queensland. The Utopian dreams of the people who had come to the country in the days of the gold-boom had not been realized. They had been forced to fit themselves into the already-formed social structure as best they could, some of them settling on small holdings, others drifting to the cities or forming a floating proletariat. Restlessness and discontent were general. There was already a wide gulf between the successful pastoralists and business men on the one hand and the masses of workers and selectors on the other—for even life on the land was poverty-stricken and unpromising, since cold storage had not yet opened up the oversea markets to the farmer. That dream of a Utopia lingered at the back of the

gold-seekers' minds and was passed on to their children. This younger generation read Edward Bellamy and Henry George. It was ready to respond to the fervid appeals of William Lane, who had appeared in Brisbane as the prophet of the moment, calling on men to bind themselves in a new brotherhood and create a Commonwealth founded on justice and equality.

It is hard to exaggerate Lane's influence in Queensland during the late eighties and early nineties. A popular journalist, he had founded the *Boomerang*, a radical weekly (on the same lines as the Sydney *Bulletin*) that attracted people by its vivacity, wit, and readiness to welcome new ideas. Its policy was a democratic nationalism. "We are for this Australia," said Lane, "for the nationality that is creeping to the verge of being, for the progressive people that is just plucking aside the curtains of its fate." Such pronouncements were in accord with the spirit of the times: but there was also a feeling that the new nation could not be created without great economic changes. Single-tax ideas had been spread through the visits of Henry George: there was an infiltration of popular Marxism. Lane, with his personal charm and his prophetic genius, drew the brightest minds of the community towards him, and infected them with enthusiasm for the new day that was about to dawn. Even Samuel Griffith, the cold and cautious politician, was moved to write an article for him that would have satisfied the keenest follower of Marx by its insistence that all wealth came from labour applied to raw products and that Capital was appropriating the bulk of the surplus value.

But Lane was not content with radical journalism. There was a Puritanism about him that led him to leave his successful *Boomerang* and engage more directly in public agitation. Unionism had just emerged as the new hope of the Australian working-class. Lane became its apostle and, in a sense, its poet. Through his inspiration the impulse of men to combine for the protection of their standards of living became a crusade. The crudities of the day-to-day struggle were lifted to a plane of noble idealism: even those who had no great belief in the co-operative commonwealth, were raised a little above themselves by their devotion to Lane. Billy Lane! The name

sounded like a bar of music in the camps of western bush-workers and shearers.

To Christison and his fellow-pastoralists, on the other hand, it had the echo of something evil and menacing. They had come to regard their properties as isolated little kingdoms that they had created out of what was, practically, a void. The very qualities of will and self-dependence that had supported them in the fight for existence made them intolerant of what they looked upon as outside interference in the running of their places. They could regard with sympathy, even affection, the old hands who had served them and such blacks as had been domesticated: but this floating proletariat of shearers and bushworkers! This new unionism that cut across the natural loyalties of a man to his boss and his station!

The struggle in the inland districts was carried out between two groups far removed from one another in understanding, and lasted, in a spasmodic way, for some years. It had all the passionate intensity, if not the bloodshed, of a civil war. Organized camps of unionists were opposed by armed camps of military and police: but luckily they were never involved in general conflict. Such acts of violence as took place were mainly the work of individuals—shed-burnings, grass-fires, and the destruction of fences—and they were met with vindictive sentences, whole strike-committees often being caught up in the net of the law. The pastoralists found, when the clash came, that authority was whole-heartedly on their side. Even Griffith, who had written so disturbingly of a new distribution of wealth, showed by his actions as Premier that he had, after all, merely been contributing to a Christmas issue.

Lammermoor, as a cattle station, was a little removed from the centre of the struggle, which ended during the early nineties in a distinct triumph for the pastoralists. The revolutionary heat passed from unionism when Lane and his disciples left for Paraguay: over Queensland there brooded what Wells has called "the ironic silence that follows great controversies." Christison was left to develop his place along the lines of his dream. He visited famous studs in England and bought pedigree stock: he extended his homestead till it took

on the look of a great estate. Life on the station was mellowed by social amenities, by the entertaining of interesting visitors, by memories of travel. The distance between Lammermoor and the drawing-rooms of West Kensington (Christison's wife had taken a house there) had somehow lessened. Grooms and herdsmen arrived from overseas with stallions, bulls, even deerhounds for hunting kangaroos. There were race-meetings, picnics, local cattle-shows. Christison's herd of Herefords became known throughout the country. By the end of the century he could boast that he had five hundred head of horses descended from the best blood of England and Arabia; stud cattle second to none; and a general herd of forty thousand head from which seven thousand "fats" could be yearly culled for the market.

It was the great drought of 1898-1902, a drought unprecedented in the history of the inland, that made him think of selling out and returning to Europe. He fought the drought with spirit, and struggled on with depleted flocks and herds till the good years came again: but he was an old man now and the spring had gone from him. Many of his friends of the early days had died: others had returned to the comforts of the coastal towns. And, working against his attachment to the country he had made his own, was the call of his English wife and of his family that had been domiciled abroad. He offered Lammermoor for sale, stipulating that the purchaser should "treat my blacks well," and refusing to discuss terms till their right to remain on the place as their home was settled.

So ended a typical pioneering episode; though perhaps it is doing less than justice to Christison's individual qualities to represent him as a type. There have been other great pastoralists who were dominated by habits arising out of their early struggles, the necessity to make every "pound a prisoner," to pare down all wages and expenses to the bone. Tyson, it is said, often carried his tucker-bag when travelling on the coastal boats, preferring (although he was perhaps the richest squatter of his day) to eat alone on deck rather than pay for a meal—the meals not being included in the passage money. There was none of this niggardliness about Christison. Founding a

home meant to him the creation of a civilized way of life. His breeding experiments, his searches for artesian water, his activities in building up a frozen-meat industry, were not directed towards his own profit alone. His imagination had a definitely creative side. He was more concerned with what he could put into the country than with what he could take out.

Yet, like most of the early pastoralists, he was well rewarded for his work. Not so the explorers. Leichhardt, who by his first expedition opened people's eyes to the grazing possibilities of the north, found a nameless grave in the desert. Landsborough, who directed Christison to the rich country around Lammermoor, died alone in a tin hut on the shores of Moreton Bay, his only property the few acres of sandy soil allowed him by the Government. Many of the drovers who pioneered the inland stock-routes with other people's cattle never secured a greater stake in the country than final accommodation for their bones. None of these men ever expected that their enterprise would pay dividends. In his comfortable English home (Burwell Park, Lincolnshire) Christison could afford to look back with tolerance on what had seemed to him, when he wrote "Queensland our Home: to be or not to be?" as the persecution by socialistic Governments of the squatters who had "made" the country.

THE EDITOR

J. F. Archibald

WHEN, in January 1880, a small paper the *Bulletin* appeared in Sydney few people could have thought the event one of importance. It was a crude production of eight pages, badly illustrated, and lacking in any kind of authority. Its style was lively but uncertain, its direction vague. Two of its pages were occupied with an account of the hanging of the Wantabadgery bushrangers, prefaced by an interview with the hangman: the rest of it had the feeling of something hastily improvised. There was little hint of political purpose, or even of basic idea in it. Yet the public found an unexpectedness and piquancy in its tone: it provided a change from the dullness and formality of current journalism: the first issue was bought up eagerly. But many such papers have had a good reception. Probably the *Bulletin* would have died after a short burst of promising activity, like the rest of them, if of its two founders —John Haynes and J. F. Archibald—one had not been an editor of genius. Archibald, in spite of some haziness about form, really had an idea of what he wanted to create. He was not particularly interested in politics: his mind did not work along political lines: but he was filled with patriotic fervour. It was his dream to found a national newspaper. He had a passion to make his fellow-Australians aware of their country, aware of its varied life and individual character: he was eager to see the imitative habit of mind that was stultifying social life in the towns supplanted by the tough, sardonic independence that he felt was the spirit of the inland.

Essentially it was his own spirit. Though frail in physique, nervy in temperament, Archibald's attitude to life was robust and ebullient. The social pretensions of the wealthy importers

of Sydney moved him to irreverent mockery. Born in Geelong, of mixed Irish and English parentage, he had been apprenticed to the printing-trade, and had worked variously as a journalist, finally making some money in a business adventure in Queensland. His education had been a haphazard one, but he had picked up a good deal of promiscuous knowledge. Knowledge of the country, of what interested people, of how they really lived, spoke, and thought. He conceived the idea of a paper written largely by ordinary men, with experts to point its paragraphs—a paper that would have the colloquial raciness of popular speech, sharpened with the wit of the bohemian journalist.

Necessarily, it would have to be mainly destructive in the beginning. Sydney, at the time, was complacent and mid-Victorian and needed the tonic influence of a little ridicule.

"It was a cant-ridden community," says Archibald, "Cant—the offensive, horrible cant of the badly-reformed sinner—reigned everywhere. There was no health in the public spirit socially and politically; all was a mean subservience to a spirit of snobbery and dependency. What was most Australian in spirit had been lost by the secession first of Victoria, and then of Queensland. Sydney socially limped in apish imitation after London ideas, habits, and manners. Politically and industrially it was the same. And over all brooded, in law courts, press, and Parliament, the desolating cruelty inherited from 'The System.' Sydney invited revolt from existing conditions, and the *Bulletin* was the organ of that revolt. It was to stand for more humanity in the laws, more freedom in the Parliament, more healthy independence in the press."

But before doing this it had to find a form and a style, take on a definite shape. The artists and writers who were to give it body and substance had to be drawn out of the void. Archibald was not a writer himself: his genius lay in discovering talent in others, in suggesting ideas to them, in inserting the waspish adjectives that would give sting to their sentences. His favourite literary form was the paragraph. He liked the short, pithy criticism that "ended like the crack of a stock-whip." It was a guerrilla attack that had to be made on the

forces of dullness and provincialism. This was necessitated by the circumstances and by the forces at his disposal. He would spare no pains in going over the ill-written contributions that gradually dribbled in from every corner of the continent, cutting, polishing, sprinkling the pepper of wit over theatrical notices or homely disquisitions on fluke in sheep. Gradually the *Bulletin* began to evolve a concise and distinctive style of its own.

One of its first regular contributors was W. H. Traill, a big, breezy Highlander, who gave it body by bringing in the political ideas of Protection and Land Nationalization. But there was a moral fervour about Traill that might easily have caused the downfall of the struggling paper. On an excursion to Clontarf, a popular holiday-resort, he was shocked by the conduct of young men and girls—the larrikins of the period and their donahs—for whom, as yet, there were no surf-beaches to provide an outlet for their high spirits. The centre of the revelry was a dancing-hall owned by a publican, and Traill described what he saw going on there as a "saturnalia of vice." His article, bristling with livid phrases, created a sensation in Sydney. The public was unused to such journalistic attacks, and the publican, after vainly trying to force the *Bulletin* to withdraw its accusations, finally brought an action for libel. Only contemptuous damages were given him by the jury, but the costs of the case were too heavy for Archibald and Haynes to meet, and while the paper was being reorganized they were arrested and cast into prison. Great interest had been aroused by the case, though, and public sympathy was with the *Bulletin*. In a sense the name of the paper was made. While Archibald edited his paragraphs in a cell, George Dibbs, the politician, went round with the hat and the unpaid costs of the Clontarf case were made up by supporters of free criticism.

Strangely enough, one result of Traill's article was that the paper fell into his hands. The printer, who had a lien over the property, insisted that he should take over the editorship. Traill did more than that. He secured the finance to get control of the *Bulletin*: employed Haynes and Archibald on small

salaries: and voluntarily gave them the right to acquire shares in it again.

By the middle of the eighties the *Bulletin* could feel solid ground beneath its feet. It had a comparatively small public but a steady one—one upon which it could count. Its lively comment upon public affairs had become a mental necessity to numbers of people, and its red cover was as familiar in the professional man's club as in the shearer's hut. A secure position allowed it to extend its range, particularly on the pictorial side. Promising artists were brought from abroad—Hopkins from America, Phil May from London—and the freedom the *Bulletin* allowed these men developed them and drew out all their talent. There were no limits of good form or political timidity placed on their high-spirited mockery: it did not need to stop at pricking the skin, it could penetrate to the bone. And often these artists of the *Bulletin* set the whole continent laughing at some solemn piece of flunkeyism. Caricature is a comparatively simple art. It has an immediate appeal: it does not demand much from its audience. Consequently it can flourish where other arts find it hard to strike root. Before long a school of black-and-white art had grown up in Australia that carried the *Bulletin's* name across the world.

But the pictorial side of the paper was not Archibald's province. He had to find the men who had eyes of their own and a latent gift for using words, so that out of the sum of their observations there might be built up a weekly cavalcade of the country's activities, at work and play. The idea of a paper written largely by its readers was always at the back of his mind. He encouraged the wheat-grower who had something to say about rust, the amateur naturalist who had watched birds and animals, the bullock-driver who could talk about his team. The product was a popular journalism of the liveliest kind. Life in the bush stimulates observation of men, of animals, of natural phenomena: and the page of "Aboriginalities" that became a feature of the paper was a sort of perpetually-burning camp-fire around which bushmen could sit and swap experiences. Gradually they learned to do it with concision and wit. There never was an editor swifter and

more generous than Archibald in his appreciation of the bright phrase or unexpected quirk of humour. Busy as he was, he sent out countless little words of praise in his hurried personal scrawl. All over the continent he was encouraging men to express themselves about the things that most interested them.

"Bits," D. H. Lawrence was to sum up the result afterwards. "Bits about bullock-drivers and the biggest loads on record, about the biggest piece of land ploughed by a man in a day, recipes for mange in horses, twins, turnips, accidents to reverend clergymen, and so on."

But it was necessary, in Archibald's place and period, to begin with bits. He had to build out of the materials at hand.

And out of this journalism, almost as a by-product, came literature, the first imaginative response to the life of the country. Since the days of Wentworth and Barron Field, there had always been a certain amount of writing in Australia, some of it touched with distinction, but the tone was invariably that of an outsider. Literature to the earlier essayists was a product of the library and the coffee-house. They adopted a pose of detachment from this strange "colonial" life: they wrote of it whimsically or patronizingly in an Addisonian style, for audiences as superior as themselves. Often their work reeked of a false sophistication, oftener still it was stiff with a starchy dignity they imagined to be "literary." They were essentially bookish men, with little creative impulse: even Deniehy, though he had some original heat in him, was happier in dealing with subjects that had been already assimilated than with the raw world around him. As for the novelists, a continual uncertainty about their audience took any intimacy or directness from their work. The stories of Henry Kingsley and Marcus Clarke were written as though for readers far removed from the scenes they pictured: and Boldrewood, though his natural gifts sometimes led him into identifying himself with the life and people he was dealing with, would continually bring himself up with a jerk, as though nearly caught in conduct unbecoming a gentleman.

The writers Archibald brought forward had none of this self-consciousness. Their audience was the people around

them: they wrote as they felt. Inevitably their work had a spontaneity, a naturalness, even when its form was crude. Little vignettes of life on the farm or selection, ballads that had to do with some incident in the day's work, humorous yarns that had been given shape by repetition around the camp-fire. This was a real popular literature, of more essential worth than the pretentious writing it superseded. For its values had to be genuine, those accepted by people in their daily lives, not the conventional ones they might be tempted to adopt as novel-readers. Sentimentality was banned: any feeling in a story had to be implied in its presentation of the facts.

"Give me the facts," Archibald would say. "If they're put in the right order they'll make their weight felt."

Naturally there were limitations to the growth of this literature. All stories had to be short, compressed, fragmentary: there was no room for development of character or variation of style. And so rigid was Archibald's editing that most of the work that passed through his hands seemed to become impressed with the thumb-mark of an anonymous potter. The literary tone of the paper had been set by him. It was tough and masculine, leaning to the macabre in humour, the sardonic in general treatment of a theme. Nature was a harsh mother whose whimsies had to be faced with stoicism. There was always a drought to be endured, a flood to be evaded, a pest to be fought. Attention was mainly fixed on the figure of the bushman, with his courage, his "casualness," his cheerful grin in the face of calamity. It was no idyllic Australia these writers pictured under Archibald's guidance, but a gaunt, haggard continent that somehow evoked a natural loyalty in the people it bred.

And this point of view was accepted by most of their readers. These readers found a freshness in the *Bulletin* stories—a freshness that came not merely from the deliberately unromantic point of view about nature, but from the democratic approach to life, the recognition that a swagman was as well worth writing about as a squatter. It was through the swagman's eyes, indeed, rather than through the squatter's,

that most of the happenings were viewed. This in itself gave an original tang to the *Bulletin* story, for democratic writing is rare in English, and was still rarer then. Most English novels of the day looked at life from the vantage-point of an observer securely placed in the leisured middle-class, and when working-people were brought in they were made comic or pathetic. They had no interior life, these queer creatures from the masses: they were treated as flat characters rather than as people of three dimensions. How differently Price Warung dealt with his convicts, Henry Lawson with his shearers, Joseph Furphy with his garrulous bullock-drivers! These writers were conscious of men as members of the human race rather than as a class. Essentially their work, for all its local colouring, was more universal than that of the contemporary English novelists—novelists who, for the average suburban reader, overshadowed them completely while they were alive. It still remains fresh after nearly half a century.

Perhaps the ballad, though, was the most popular literary feature of the *Bulletin*. Since the early days crude ballads, for singing or recitation (often modelled on the Come-all-ye's of the Irish immigrants), had been widely circulated, and the remnants of them remain as a clue to the social history of the time. For they express the point of view, not of followers of English literary modes like Rowe and Deniehy, but of the classes being affected by the changes taking place—free selectors, squatters, currency lads attracted by the romantic life of the bushranger. In the hands of Paterson and other writers Archibald discovered, these ballads began to take on form and vigour.

Paterson had something of the primitive song-writer in him, and a sharp sense of character. His "Man from Snowy River" became a national figure, as definite as if his features had been struck out from the marble with a chisel: and at the same time the loose ballad-form was being used by other men as a medium for circulating political ideas. It was in the *Bulletin*, for instance, that Lawson's "Faces in the Street" was published, a poem that acted on the youth of the country like a kettle-drum.

Archibald's great qualities were his sureness in pouncing on men who had something to say, his patience in drawing them out, his generosity in giving them encouragement. He had no formal standards in literature. His cultural background was of the flimsiest; in his judgment of what was good he had to trust to instinct alone—to instinct and his varied experience of life. It was only after long argument that A. G. Stephens, one of his discoveries, persuaded him that a critical Red Page would be an advantage to the paper. He was soon content to leave that entirely in the hands of Stephens. "What A.G.S. says may be wrong-headed, but it can't help being interesting. He has distinction." He was proud of his flair for finding men who had distinction. Proud, too, of giving them freedom.

"Anyhow, old man," he told Stephens in later years, "I had the good sense to let you alone."

Impish, nervy, mercurial, he took the devotion that came to him lightly. There was never any pose of the Great Editor about him. He could work at high pressure, but he preferred, especially as he grew older, to play the dilettante, to lounge in the club-room with cigar alight and eyes twinkling behind their glasses, making witticisms about politicians and social parvenus. The solid success of the paper he attributed to men of more phlegm—to Macleod, who had business genius, and to James Edmond with his amazing toughness, humour, imperturbability. "Edmond has Chinese nerves," he would say. He himself had none of that calm: he was so restless that he could not sit out a performance at a theatre. He liked to think of himself as French—very early in life he had changed his baptismal John Feltham into "Jules François." That was part of his innate romanticism: for him France stood for what was light, un-Victorian, incalculable: the colour of the boulevard, chiefly, but, if need be, the barricade.

Yet he always remained the born journalist, the man whose driving impulse was to seize on obscure incidents in the life about him and dramatize them, emphasize their significance in the passing show. The journalistic daemon possessed him even in the most tragic surroundings. A friend who visited

him at the institution in which he was placed during his mental breakdown tells of how he would secretly nick out paragraphs from the newspaper with his fingernail while he was talking, his eyes glancing round in furtive apprehension to see that no attendant was near.

"I can't help it," he apologized pathetically, "Habit! I can't resist an interesting paragraph. They give me a bad time here because they think I'm just destructive."

"Bits!" It was his fate to be a collector and inspirer of brilliant fragments. When in late life he founded a magazine the *Lone Hand*, meant to be complementary to the paper he had started so long ago, it was not a success. What had seemed lively in a weekly had a merely flashy look when set down in more lasting form. There was a limit to the cheeky approach to life, to nose-thumbing and the piquancy of valuing everything in terms of the street. A new day had dawned and a new outlook was wanted: though the *Lone Hand* aimed at being constructive, at providing an outlet for serious and sustained critical and creative work, it could not quite get away from the family facetiousness and the family dialect. Archibald's own reminiscences in it were trivial in tone, and soon petered out. The particular work he had set out to do was done, and in 1914 he recognized it by selling out his interest in the *Bulletin*.

The will he left behind proved his patriotism, and his desire to link his own country with the country he so romantically loved. It provided that a substantial prize should be given annually for the best portrait of an eminent Australian, and that a fountain should be erected by a French sculptor to commemorate the association of France and Australia in the Great War. Strangely, no provision was made for literature. Perhaps, as an enemy of the dull and academic, Archibald felt that literature was safer if left to live by its wits.

THE UNIONIST

W. G. Spence

TRADE UNIONISM did not develop in Australia till the latter part of the nineteenth century. There had been combinations of workmen long before that period, but they had a special character, and were mainly local in their significance. In 1837, for instance, the seamen and labourers employed in fitting out sea-going vessels at Sydney asked for an advance of a shilling on the ruling rate of wages (three shillings a day), and refused to engage with shipowners unless their demands were met. According to the shipowners this demand was made by a "systematic organized body whose intentions are not yet fully developed, but whose objects, if accomplished, would materially retard the progressive advancement of our colonial marine." Other small groups were combining about that date. In 1840, an "Australian Society of Compositors" was seeking to obtain better conditions for its members, and the same year there were strikes among the journeymen tailors of Sydney, and the carpenters and joiners of Melbourne. Later on, in 1848, the miners and carters at Burra Burra, in South Australia, were involved in a dispute about wages, and the tailors of Hobart struck because the employers engaged men who were not members of their society. In 1850 the Operative Stonemasons' Society was formed in Melbourne.

But these movements were sporadic, the activities of isolated groups of men in a non-industrial society. The conditions of the time were against any widespread association of workmen, even in particular crafts. Besides there was the Masters and Servants Act, under which a conspiracy to raise wages or otherwise improve conditions of labour was an offence

punishable with imprisonment. The very title of this Act reveals the feudal spirit in which it was conceived. Australia, before the gold-rush, was a country in which the men who employed labour were emphatically masters. But even in England, where more liberal ideas prevailed, workmen were having a hard battle to assert their right to combine for trade purposes. The Act of 1824 (repealing the repressive acts that had been passed after the French Revolution) apparently gave them this right, but as soon as any real activity in organization began to show itself forgotten laws were invoked against them. This was strikingly demonstrated in the famous case of the Tolpuddle Martyrs. A panic had arisen among the landed interests because of the growth of unionism among the agricultural labourers, but in the state of public opinion at the time it was impossible to repeal the new Acts allowing men the right to organize. Instead, Lord Melbourne, or his advisers, dug up an old Act about the Administration of Secret Oaths, passed at the time of the naval mutiny at the Nore, and under this Act six Dorchester labourers were sentenced in 1834 to seven years' transportation to Australia.

There is no evidence, though, that these Tolpuddle Martyrs planted any seeds of unionism in this country. They served part of their sentences, were pardoned, and went back to England. Nor can our unionism trace its descent from those other village Hampdens who, in the words of J. L. and Barbara Hammond, "sleep by the shores of Botany Bay." The violence of the law had its effect. In England the workers, thwarted in the industrial area, turned to the political and supplied most of the dynamic force of Chartism. In Australia the efforts of small groups to control economic conditions were curbed easily by the Masters and Servants Act: there were many successful prosecutions under this Act during the forties. But soon there was to come a revolution that changed the social structure by means other than the human will. This was the discovery of gold.

It is hardly possible to exaggerate the change brought about in the relation of man and master by the discovery of gold. No mere liberalization of the laws could have so effectively

tilted the balance of economic power. Here was a free and independent life offered to the ordinary workman, with easy money and the chance of a fortune as well. At least it seemed so to the crowds of shepherds, stonemasons, journeymen printers who dropped their work and poured into the camps of Ballarat and the Turon. Flocks were left unshepherded: buildings in process of construction were abandoned overnight: ships lay deserted at the wharves of Sydney and Port Phillip. And the few who remained at work shared in the boom. They found, for the first time, that their labour was a commodity of some value: it could almost command its own price. The pastoralists were in desperation. With the price of beef and wool rocketing they were being deprived of their reserves of cheap labour. They actually sent a petition to the Government asking that martial law be proclaimed and digging for gold peremptorily forbidden. It looked to them as if chaos had come to the country, as if the system on which their power rested was doomed.

So, in a sense, it was. After that influx of adventurous spirits from all over the world, after the ideas about liberty and equality that had been let loose in the air, after Eureka with its clash of diggers and soldiers, there could never be a return to the days of the Masters and Servants Act. But gradually economic conditions began to adjust themselves again to the employers' advantage. The alluvial gold petered out and mining had to be carried on at deeper levels with the aid of machinery. By the end of the sixties there were few men left who could earn an independent living with pick and shovel.

The general standard of living sagged; the enormous masses of new population spread over the country looking for jobs. These included large numbers of Chinese: the Victorian census of 1861 shows them to have formed 11 per cent of the adult population. And it was the fear of being forced down to the economic level of the Chinese that made the workers in the mines turn to ideas of organization. Unprotected as they were by any standard of wages or unity among

themselves, these Chinese coming into the country without restriction seemed a real menace to them.

One of the first men to see the possibilities of unionism was Walter Guthrie Spence, a young miner of Creswick. He had lived on mining-fields all his life, and as a small boy had listened to Peter Lalor on Bakery Hill, and watched the red-coats assemble for their assault on Eureka Stockade. Growing up he had tackled work of various kinds, but his chief experience had been in mining, and he had known what it was to sweat in narrow drives where the air was so foul that it was impossible to keep a candle alight. There had been several attempts by the miners to improve conditions by organized effort. Small unions had been established in various centres and in 1874 a conference was held in Bendigo where it was resolved that they should all unite under the title of the Amalgamated Miners' Association of Victoria. But the organization was sketchy and lacking in any cohesive principle. Members tended to fall away when their particular grievances —faulty machinery or poor ventilation—were remedied and in Victoria the Regulation and Inspection of Mines and Machinery Act of 1877 actually put an end to the worst abuses of the new deep-level mining.

It was not until an attack was made upon wages in 1878, that Spence came into the union movement as an active organizer, and for the next twenty years its history is his own. Energetic, breezy, capable, he had many qualifications for leadership, especially in a movement that called for day-to-day courage and resource. From the beginning he saw that the wrongs of wage-earners could not be righted by any merely local activity. There had been organization in the coal-fields of New South Wales as early as 1869, but when a conflict arose the employers found it comparatively easy to bring in "free" labour from outside. Spence's ambition was to unite all miners—gold, silver, copper and coal—in one body, with an intercolonial council to deal with large issues and arrange for financial help in cases of need, while leaving each district self-governing in its own sphere. It was a hard fight against the conservatism of men who had never been taught

to look beyond their own borders, but after a few years Spence could view the result with some satisfaction. Branches of the A.M.A. had been established in every colony, including Tasmania and New Zealand, and all those engaged in any form of mining were united, at least for the time being.

In the course of the struggle Spence's own future was settled for him. He had entered it as an active miner, but very soon he found that his name was on the black list and no mine was open to him. In those days the boycott was rigorously applied to men engaged in union activity. Spence accepted the situation as a matter of course ("It really gave me greater freedom to be a bigger thorn in the side of capitalism," he said later), and after working for awhile with some mates in a tributary mine he settled down to his true role of agitator. Billy Spence! To miners and bushmen there was something democratic and reassuring about the name.

It was in 1886 he turned his attention to the pastoral industry. Until that time all attempts to organize the shearers and bushworkers had failed, for they were a nomadic class, usually only employed on stations for part of the year. Sometimes they were farmers or the sons of farmers, supplementing their earnings from the land: sometimes they were miners out of a job. The conditions under which they worked on the stations were thoroughly bad. The pastoralist, in spite of the scarcity of labour during the land-boom, had always maintained his original dominance in the western areas: and though he might be merely representative of a bank the atmosphere around him was feudal. There was the comfortable homestead with its office, store, and gardens: it had the air of a seat of government. Some distance away stood the woolshed and the shearers' hut, an insanitary slab building with bunks in tiers around the walls and often a muddy pool in the centre left by the seasonal rains on the sunken floor. Over the whole place hovered the shadow of the Masters and Servants Act of 1846. The shearer had to sign a fixed agreement before he was given a pen: payment was at so much a hundred sheep, or at a lower rate if the work were unsatisfactory, the pastoralist or his agent being the

judge: all provisions had to be bought at the station store, at a price often much higher than that prevailing at the nearest township. There were many clauses in the agreement that caused bitterness. One was that if any sheep were badly-shorn payment was to be at the "second price," even for those already passed as satisfactory. And it was easy to penalize men who made trouble by circulating their names around the sheds before next shearing.

Spence started his organization at Ballarat. There had been a sudden reduction of rates by the pastoralists, and those of the miners who periodically went shearing were indignant and ready for concerted action. It was inevitable that they should turn to Spence, who had shown such energy and initiative in the work of the A.M.A. A meeting was held to establish a Shearers' Union, and objects and rules were adopted. The movement spread. Similar unions were founded in Bourke, and in Wagga Wagga, and next year these became amalgamated in the A.S.U., covering New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, while the Queensland shearers formed a powerful union of their own. A new shearing agreement was adopted, and immediately the fight for its enforcement began.

During the next few years the gospel of unionism swept like wildfire throughout the back country, carried by crusaders who were often filled with religious passion. They preached a doctrine of brotherhood among the faithful and punishment for the heretic, and the "scab." Soon they developed a technique of persuasion that was extraordinarily effective. Guerrillas would ride up to a shed where non-union men were working and pitch a camp just outside the station-boundaries: from this emissaries sallied out at night to carry out their duties of conversion. Often it was merely a matter of talking over men who had come from the agricultural districts and knew nothing about unionism: sometimes pressure was applied by threats and violence. The organizers of those days had no doubts about the end justifying the means. They believed that refusal to join a union was treachery to the cause of the workers, and they carried an olive-leaf in one

hand and a bludgeon in the other: or perhaps it would be better to say a union-ticket and—whatever weapon was most effective. Spence himself was an amiable, peace-loving man and a strong believer in tact: besides as president, treasurer, and general director of the movement he could not afford to advocate violence of any kind. His plan was to conciliate the squatters in each district by posting them circulars and copies of the union rules and trying to arrange a conference. As for the refractory ones among the men he felt it was only a matter of finding the right argument or the right time. Yet he had a secret belief in the occasional usefulness of the water-cure and could tell with a chuckle of men who had become firm believers in unionism after a second ducking in the creek.

Altogether the early success of the A.S.U. was striking. From a nomadic crowd of poorly-paid, casual workers the shearers became an influential body with a pride in their skill and their organized strength. They were able to enforce a new agreement with the pastoralists that improved both their wages and their working conditions, and with their broad, national spirit they leavened the unionism of the cities. This had been largely a small craft affair, loosely linked by Trades Hall Councils, though the Sydney Maritime Council had been formed in 1884, uniting the different unions connected with shipping: and from 1879 there had been attempts to hold intercolonial congresses that would work out a general policy for the labour movement. But conditions in the cities had been unfavourable for a federal development of unionism. There were distinctions created by varying tariff systems: New South Wales was Free Trade and Victoria Protectionist: and this led to different industries growing up in each place, together with different standards of living. The boot-industry was important in Melbourne, for instance; it hardly existed in Sydney. And even these isolated small industries were divided by old traditions of allegiance to a particular craft. There was the unwillingness of the skilled man to unite in a common purpose with the less-skilled—the contempt of "tenpenny Jack" for "ninepenny Joe." The new unionism

of the Outback, with its federal character, its vague but comprehensive ideas of a brotherhood among all workers, did a great deal to break down these petty divisions.

But there was a serious check awaiting it. It had come to birth at a favourable time, when there was an expansive spirit in the air, and the idea of workmen forming widespread associations could be taken lightly. Boom conditions prevailed. Loan money was pouring into the country: syndicates and even banks were speculating in land: seasons were comparatively good. Any increase in the working-expenses of a station could be met by running a few more sheep on it. But the pastoralists in general had never accepted the idea that they should be forced to employ union labour. It had been easy to bring pressure to bear on the individual sheep-owner: indeed some of these had been sympathetic to the idea of unionism. Many stations, however, were owned by large corporations, whose interests were not merely in the land, and these were disinclined to accept what they called "dictation by unionists," especially when times worsened. In 1890 they formed a powerful union among themselves, and the next few years saw the bitterest industrial warfare Australia has ever experienced.

It began, as most wars do, in a skirmish. Guided by the Pastoralists' Union, stations on the Darling Downs announced that they would employ non-unionists only. The Australian Labour Federation of Queensland took action. They selected a particular station and refused to allow its wool to be loaded at Brisbane unless the pastoralists agreed to employ unionists. That first small victory was to the men, but its effect was brief. The Pastoralists' Union, a little shaky and uncertain because of its defeat, linked up with other organizations, and a Federated Employers' Union was formed with strong financial backing. Thus when the great maritime conflict took place at the end of the year both men and employers were thoroughly organized and the issue chosen was a significant one—the right of an officers' union to affiliate with the Trades Hall.

Most of industrial Australia was involved in the fight, and

from the beginning it was waged ruthlessly. The marine officers had for some time been asking for a conference with the shipowners and had only, as a last resort, affiliated with the powerful main body of the unionists: their case was that a right of association which their employers fully enjoyed should not be denied to them. A section of the public supported them, including Higinbotham, Chief Justice of Victoria. Among their fellow-unionists sympathy was wholehearted. The Amalgamated Miners' Association decided to cease work: the shearers of New South Wales, who had their own quarrel with the employers, struck also, and the wharf-workers agreed not to handle wool shorn by non-unionist labour. Levies were made on such unionists as remained in work, and large funds were soon at the disposal of the officials in command, including sums from England, where the strong support given by Australian unionists to the London dockers was not forgotten. During the two months' struggle, which tied up the coastal trade, there were proposals to charter ships and man them with unionists, but these came to nothing. There was no federal body, as yet, that could handle such an undertaking, and the local committees of Sydney and Melbourne were concerned in the immediate business of raising funds.

It was in the west that the struggle took on its most dramatic form, for the shearers and bushworkers assembled in camps that were organized with almost military discipline. Practically all these men were mounted: some of them were armed with the rifles they used in kangaroo-shooting during the off-season. And they were held together by a corps spirit that had been created in previous conflicts with the pastoralists. No wonder the sight of these lean, jesting bushmen riding about the country in bands like guerrillas aroused fears of revolution in timorous minds! Alarmist reports of what was happening out west reached the cities: the newspapers made the most of any attack by strikers on the coach-loads of non-unionists sent up from the coast: old gentlemen from India wrote letters recalling their experiences in the Mutiny. The military chiefs, in particular, acted as if the situation were a

desperate one. Colonel Tom Price, in Melbourne, preparing for what might arise from a Sunday afternoon meeting of citizens in a park, advised his men not to point their rifles in the air, but to "fire low and lay 'em out," and Major Ricardo, in Brisbane, addressing an expedition organized for the west, said with Latin grandiloquence, "Go forward, gentlemen, and defend your hearths and homes." It seemed as if only a spark were needed to precipitate a bitter class war.

But circumstances were against the strikers. Whether the employers had deliberately chosen their time or not, it was favourable to them. The boom had burst: the streets were full of unemployed, a depressed army of casual workers that could be used in the conflict. Gradually the strike collapsed. The marine officers asked to be received by the shipowners as a separate body, and the unions supporting them had to acknowledge a general defeat.

In Queensland, though, the struggles flared up with more violence a few months later when the Pastoralists' Union, flushed with success, tried to enforce an agreement that reduced wages and insisted on "freedom of contract." Once again the west was spotted with camps of guerrillas, organized and provisioned by the unions, and there were savage conflicts between these assembled men and the strike-breakers brought up from the south. The general atmosphere was one of civil war. Special constables were sworn in, and a detachment of military was sent up to Clermont: but, on the whole, public opinion in the western districts was on the side of the men, the storekeepers and business people in one township subscribing to buy them arms. Probably these had their own material interests in view. Such local tradespeople depended more on the bushworkers' custom than on that of the stations, and cuts in wages affected them directly. But other factors were at work, too; a democratic spirit was abroad in the country, inspired partly by the writings and speeches of William Lane. The influence of this fiery journalist carried all through the back-country: there was magic in his personality and in his written words. He had given over the

Boomerang and had founded the *Worker*, a paper devoted openly to the creation of a co-operative commonwealth.

"You are not merely strikers," he told the men, "you are pioneers of a new Australia that will be built on the ashes of the old."

But naturally the struggle was not conducted in the spirit of pure idealism. Displays of force on the one side promoted episodes of violence on the other. Convoys of blacklegs would be attacked and the men brought into camp as willing or unwilling prisoners. There were occasional shed-burnings and the firing of grass. A demonstration by the military at one point would be followed by a gathering of unionists at another, well-mounted horsemen ambling down the street of some quiet township and disappearing over the edge of the plain, to the amusement of all the local people except perhaps the policeman and the newspaper correspondent. From the beginning the Government of the day looked on this gathering of men in camps as a threat to itself, and determined to suppress it with the utmost powers of the law, which were considerable. The Queensland Trade Union Act of 1886 was based entirely on the English Act of 1871, which, though establishing the rights of collective bargaining, was coupled with a Criminal Law Amendment Act that visited with severe penalties, picketing, intimidation, molesting, or watching and besetting.

It was a pliable instrument in the hands of any power that was in the position to use it, and prominent unionists were arrested on charges of "conspiracy" all over the country. They were often brought long distances in chains, and once more the smear of the convict system seemed to be drawn across public life. At Barcaldine, one of the chief centres, the members of the Strike Committee were tried in private, sentenced to gaol for three years, and ordered to find sureties afterwards. The Government of the day made little attempt to conceal its partiality: it entered directly into the dispute on the side of the pastoralists. At Barcaldine, for instance, the police magistrate had been removed because he reported that the unionists in camp there were law-abiding. The special

magistrate, who supplanted him, was told by wire: "Don't dilly-dally. Exercise vigour even if it cause bloodshed."

This abuse of the law was not looked upon with favour by the highest members of the judiciary. In Victoria, as we have seen, the Chief Justice, Higinbotham, had sent a contribution to the strike-funds during the maritime trouble, intimating that he would continue to do so weekly until the men's just demands for a conference with the employers was met. In Queensland, the Chief Justice, Sir Charles Lilley, spoke strongly against the Trade Union Act during an appeal case, calling it a delusion and a snare.

"The fact is," he said, "that all through the history of trades combination the law has been made to help the master and not the man."

But this spirit of detachment did not affect most of the minor functionaries. They entered into their work as zealous agents of the Government; in some cases they even acted in close collaboration with the Pastoralists' Union.

"Every magistrate and officer of police," says Spence, "knew that promotion depended on his activity in getting unionists jailed on any pretext."

And as an example of the Government's attitude he quotes the case of a justice of the peace who was struck off the rolls for having been seen associating with unionists.

The result of these great conflicts of the early nineties was to deflect unionism into another path. There were many causes for its defeat. One, perhaps the decisive one, was that the struggle had been forced upon it at a time when there were great reserves of unemployed in the country because of the industrial slump. Industry was in a bad way: hordes of impoverished men filled the cities, ready to seize on any chance of a job. Again, the unionists were not organized on the same national scale as the employers, who had less complex issues to deal with and could act as a centralized body. But to the men the most apparent reason for their defeat was the way the machinery of government had been used against them, and their minds began to turn toward the capture of political power.

Thus ended one phase of unionism's development. Some of its most spirited pioneers were in jail: others, rankling with a sense of injustice, were caught up in William Lane's dream of building a new Australia in Paraguay. The violence of the movement was damped down, a violence that was part of its emotional force, the drive that had carried it through the country and led large numbers of men to bind themselves in a sort of spiritual brotherhood. There had been a creative heat about unionism in those early years. It affected people who had nothing to do with its specific objects. With its strong insistence upon "mateship" it established a tradition, and definitely laid its stamp upon the national character.

Spence was not one of those immediately carried into Parliament by the unionists' drive for political power. He devoted his organizing talents to the establishment of labour leagues throughout the country—leagues that were necessary as a basis for the election of candidates and the formation of policies. It was only when unionists began to send their representatives into Parliament that they recognized how vague were their political and economic ideas. Men united in a belief in the universal brotherhood of the workers were split by such issues as that of Free Trade or Protection. A socialism that was "without doctrines" could, in the Protestant way, be interpreted by each man according to his inner light. There were defections in Parliament, perhaps the first being that of the miners' leader, Joseph Cook. Meanwhile, though working conditions had been improved in the country, the standard of wages was going down and "freedom of contract" was being enforced by the pastoralists and the large employers. Unionism's only gain during those years was in its gradual consolidation through federal congresses, a consolidation for which Spence worked assiduously, believing that it was lack of central guidance that had led to defeat on the field.

He entered the New South Wales Parliament as a member for Cobar in 1897, and occupied the seat till 1901, when he was elected to the first House of Representatives. But he was not a conspicuous success as a politician. There are men whose importance depends on the events with which they

have been connected: Spence was one of these. He had no claim to greatness in the absolute sense, though Tom Roberts was impressed with him when he came to paint his portrait.

"It is a head with more height above the eyes than the average: a Labour man and therefore a reader. . . . He holds Herbert Spencer to be the greatest thinker of his time."

A Labour man, and therefore a reader! It was a trait that marked Spence out from the other prominent people Roberts was painting at the time—not from his associates.

There was no prophetic fire in him, as in Lane; on the other hand, he had none of the political dexterity of Hughes and Holman. But, more than any other man, he was responsible for the drive that made unionism a great force in the country, and a significant phase was ended with his death.

THE PRELATE

Cardinal Moran

WHEN John Patrick Moran, Archbishop of Ossory in Ireland, was translated to the See of Sydney in 1884, he found the air alive with sectarian rancour. It had the usual origin: there was a dispute going on about religious education. Parkes's Public Instruction Act of a few years before had provided for the discontinuance of all State aid to denominational schools, the act itself being based on the idea that henceforward education in New South Wales should be "secular, compulsory, and free," though a wide interpretation was given to the first and last of these terms. "Secular" was not to be taken literally, for religious bodies were allowed to make provision for the instruction of their flocks during school hours, and "free" meant the imposition of a small fee on each child, not to exceed a shilling a week from any family. But the Council of Education which had supervised the denominational schools was to be abolished, and the whole task of primary education put into the hands of a Department of Public Instruction, under the direct control of a responsible Minister.

The change aroused fierce opposition among the Catholics. Yet they had not been contented with the previous system: indeed their attacks on it had been partly responsible for its abolition. The old Public Schools Act of 1866 (now superseded) provided for the establishment of State schools of a non-sectarian character, but it subsidized denominational schools on prescribed conditions, one of which was that they should receive the same class of teachers, the same lesson books, and be subject to the same discipline as the State schools. It did not satisfy the secularists who argued that

religious schools should not be supported out of public funds: but it was the Catholics who criticized it most sharply.

"The Act of 1866 is doomed and doomed irrevocably," Archbishop Vaughn had thundered, "I always thought it a miserable compromise and shall hail with delight the day when it ceases to be."

Such intransigeance bewildered Parkes, who was all for compromise, in every situation. He had continually resisted the secularists: with his English upbringing he believed that a little religion was a good thing, so long as it was not taken too seriously. Whenever the matter of education had come up in the House (there was the secularist motion of Dibbs in 1875) he had pleaded for tolerance, the acceptance of the *status quo*. Why raise a question like this that was bound to stir up public feeling? Why not let well alone? He could not understand the militant mind of a man like Archbishop Vaughn, who proclaimed: "There are only two logical positions: Rome or rationalism; the Catholic church or no church at all."

And when the Archbishop began to crusade against the national schools, flinging out direful prophecies about the future of a country that tolerated any kind of non-religious education, Parkes was roused to a pitch of exasperation. What did it all mean? What did the man want more than a subsidy for his denominational schools? His deep-lying distrust of Rome floated gradually to the surface: he began to talk about the "lust of the priestly mind for authority over the parents through the training of the children," and to take his stand with the secularists. The Public Instruction Act of 1880 was the result.

On the whole it was accepted cheerfully by the Protestant denominations, even such as suffered by the abolition of their grants: but the Catholics resented it with bitterness. It was oppressive and unjust, they protested: their principles demanded that they should keep their own schools in being, and yet they would be taxed to pay for the upkeep of the national schools too. The arrangements for giving religious instruction to their flocks in school hours they rejected with

contempt—there was no meaning in a religion that was not implicit in the whole atmosphere of a school. The spirit of the new system would be secular, "and where the secular system holds sway a child is taught to give more study to the probable derivation of a noun than to a study of Christ and his law."

In a community that had not yet grown used to the bold assertion of Catholic ideas (it was hardly more than sixty years since the one priest in Sydney had been deported by Macquarie) the claims of the Catholics roused resentment. Why should it be necessary, asked Parkes, to separate Catholic children from the other children of the Commonwealth? They must mix in after years and be associated with each other in the duties of everyday life: oughtn't they to learn to unite, as citizens, in promoting the general interests of their own country in preference to any other considerations whatever? But the air was full of less reasonable talk. There were the Orange lodges fanning the slumbering hatred of the Scarlet Woman. There was Archbishop Vaughn likening the new schools to the torture racks of old "because they are the most effective instruments invented by man for squeezing very gradually and almost imperceptibly the Catholic faith out of a Catholic people." And at the end of 1891 there was a public sensation when Michael Fitzpatrick, a member of Parliament and of the Catholic Church, was alleged to have been "denied the rites of Christian burial" because he had been a firm supporter of the public school system.

Such was the atmosphere of Sydney in 1884 when Archbishop Moran was introduced to his new See, in succession to the dead Vaughn. There was probably something novel and embarrassing to him in the democratic hurly-burly of such a place, where disputes were conducted loudly in the press and in the street, for he had passed most of his life in more cloistered surroundings. Born in 1830, he had gone to Rome as a very young man, being educated at Irish College where his uncle, Cardinal Cullen, was rector. While still under canonical age he had been ordained priest by special dispensation, and for the next twelve years he occupied

various chairs in the ecclesiastical colleges at Rome. He was studious: much of his time was spent in libraries, reading the early history of Ireland and of the Church. It was a rarified air he breathed in Rome—suave, conservative, ecclesiastical—and even when he went back to Ireland it was to act for six years as secretary for his uncle, Cardinal Cullen, a position that kept him almost as remote from common life. Here in Sydney he had to make fresh adjustments. It was a free-and-easy community, largely non-Catholic, and not necessarily respectful to dignitaries of the Church. Then there was this bitter quarrel about education.

At heart the new Archbishop felt as deeply about the matter as his predecessor, but he was different from Vaughn in temper and training. His natural Irish pugnacity had been mellowed by long years in Rome, where tones were modulated, even in the sharpest controversy, and one learned the advantage of diplomacy, the futility of moving to an attack like a bull at a gate. Besides he was really interested in education: he did not conceive it merely as a matter of making sure that children were grounded in the right catechism. There had been so much concern about the religious side of education, so little about its quality. And why was it that so many of the Catholics of the country were to be found in the ranks of unskilled labour, so few in prominent positions? They were abundant in the police force, in the navvy camps, in the labour gangs of large contractors, in the charge of public-houses, on the wharves and on the cab stands, dam-making or fencing in the far interior.

"In fact," he said in his first pastoral letter, "you find these poor fellows wherever the hours are long, the climate merciless, the labour unskilled, the comforts and remuneration small."

Why was this? Surely through want of definite training and purpose. Their parents brought them up to look for nothing better.

And this gave point to the slightly malicious story Parkes told of Father Lynch, the Catholic chaplain at Berrima Jail, complaining to him, as responsible Minister, that the Church

of England chaplain's salary was larger than his own. Parkes was on a visit to the jail with the Governor: he had not been very long in office. His defensive reply was that he had never considered the matter, but that he supposed the difference arose because the Anglican chaplain represented the more numerous body.

"That may be so," grumbled Father Lynch, "but it isn't fair to go by the figures outside. I have a much larger proportion of my people here than he has."

It seemed to the new Archbishop that his first work lay in the realm of education. He could not accept, any more than Vaughn, the situation about subsidies, but the general interest in it was dying down, and the time was not ripe for a new campaign. Meanwhile he could raise the standards by persistent superintendence and reform of the schools under his control. His own prestige in the community was raised when, a few months after his arrival, he was summoned to Rome by Leo XIII, his lifelong friend, and created Cardinal. A Red Hat for this latest of the Church's provinces! The event aroused great interest all over the country, for the honour had not come to Australia before. There was widespread comment in the newspapers, and some curiosity. What would the new Cardinal wear on public occasions? How was he to be addressed? When he returned he was a more conspicuous figure than on his first landing: Government Houses were open to him as he touched at the coastal ports.

And naturally he used his new position to strengthen the power and influence of his church. There were large sums of money to be raised for the establishment of the orphanages, hospitals, schools and seminaries he had in mind: there was the completion of the Sydney Cathedral itself. Fire had destroyed the one whose foundations Father Therry had laid on the site where the first masses were supposed to have been celebrated, and its successor was hardly more than an eyesore as yet, with its stunted walls unfinished and a roof of galvanized iron dumped on top to keep out the rain. Before long the Cardinal had large schemes of construction under way. There was the foundation of St Patrick's College, at

Manly, "for the training of a native priesthood": there was the plan for another seminary in the Blue Mountains that would ultimately turn out missionaries for the Pacific. And there were other institutions of various kinds to be organized. All such work could only be carried out properly if sectarian bitterness were damped down.

"The greatest need of Australia is to maintain peace, charity and concord among her citizens. To develop her resources and mature her strength needs the energies of all. Strife, dissension and discord would be the prelude to her ruin."

Religious bigotries were, in fact, being softened under the influence of this Cardinal who was diplomat enough to control his militancy when dealing with secular affairs. He made contacts, even friendships, outside his church: he took an interest in public matters. The ceremonial meeting at St Mary's in 1888, to inaugurate the work for the completion of the chancel, was a triumph for his policy of conciliation. It was the Church's contribution to the national centenary celebrations and was attended by the Governors of all the six colonies, together with judges, Cabinet Ministers, and representatives of most of the professions. The church was going up in the social scale. With the fashionable Lord Carrington being deferential to the assembled bishops and the flowery and rhetorical Dalley acting as liaison between them and the State, it seemed a far cry to the days when Macquarie had treated the first missionary as a pariah, complaining to Lord Bathurst that he was seducing the soldiers of the garrison to Popery.

Politically the Cardinal, like John Dunmore Lang before him, was able to make his voice carry beyond the immediate circle of his own flock by striking the national note and appealing to sentiments that roused a ready response from all Australians. He was an Irishman, but his years in the cosmopolitan air of Rome had made him aware of other loyalties. And Australian Catholics had often been restive under the purely Irish patriotism of their own priests. It seemed ironic that these priests should rail so continually at the "colonial" attitude around them, and yet try to imbue their parishioners

with their own nostalgia for another country, their sentimentality about the "ould sod" and the shamrock. Such activity merely meant the substitution of one kind of colonialism for another.

"I've no special duty to Ireland," O'Sullivan, a Cabinet Minister, retorted, when baited by one such propagandist at a communion breakfast, "I'm an Australian."

And this impulse to give their first loyalty to their own country was growing among all sections of the community. It was increased by the satire of the *Bulletin*, which ridiculed both orange and green, treating the religious disputes as legacies from racial quarrels overseas. The time had come, it was felt, to forget the Battle of the Boyne, to emphasize the fact that the Catholic religion was not merely an Irish affair. As far as the public was concerned, it needed a man with associations outside Ireland to do this. None could do it better than the Cardinal, who had such definite international connexions; who, for instance, was called to Rome in 1905 to attend the conclave that elected Pius X.

His influence on the country increased every year. In return, it can be said that Australia influenced him. There was nothing in his training to give him broad human sympathies or put him intimately in touch with democratic ideas. Once at a St Patrick's Day gathering W. A. Holman twitted him with only having been converted to Home Rule by his experience of Australian life. Probably it was true. He had spent his early days in ecclesiastical circles where the problems of Ireland's land or of its government were not troubling questions. National patriotism did not burn brightly in the cloisters of Rome, and the *milieu* of Cardinal Cullen was conservative. The Irish hierarchy had little in common with Michael Davitt or the militants of the Land League. But, coming to Sydney, Cardinal Moran was plunged immediately into a society whose chief life was in its politics, a society in which secular matters could not be ignored, or the questions of the day evaded. The social instinct was awakened in him. When the great maritime strike broke out in 1890, he was as deeply involved in it as any one. He patiently studied

all the points at issue: he held conferences with the strike-committees. And it was generally understood that his sympathies were on the popular side. Marching along College Street in procession to the Domain, the men stopped outside the Cathedral to give three cheers for "our friend, the Cardinal."

There were good reasons, of course, why he should show friendship with the strikers. So many of his own people, as he had found out in his first year, were in the ranks of the working classes; and they had shown in the past that it might fare badly with any religion that placed itself in the path of their unionism. But, apart from that, his mind, as he considered the problems of his adopted country, was moving along progressive lines. On such subjects as the establishment of adequate military and naval forces, the creation of secondary industries, the encouragement of national spirit, he did not differ greatly from the young radicals of the *Bulletin*. Then there were the proposals for Federation, which as yet had hardly taken definite shape. When in 1896 a Convention met at Ballarat he addressed it at the request of the President.

"I would wish," he said, "to bear witness in some humble way to the fact that the popular sentiment throughout the Australian colonies and the genuine patriotism of Australia's sons are with you in this great Federation Movement."

Later he allowed himself to be put up as a candidate for the convention of 1897-8. He was not elected, but his candidacy, as public men afterwards testified, awakened large masses to the fact that the question of Federation was immediate and important, not merely a fad of the politicians.

There were, indeed, many evidences that he had naturally a political mind, and impulses that ran counter to those of the more wealthy members of his church. The conflict showed in the matter of Pope Leo XIII's famous encyclical on Socialism. Here was a weapon for those who had looked with dismay on the growth of unionism, the great industrial troubles of the nineties, the gradual capture by the working-classes of political power. Socialism was the professed objec-

tive of the Labour Party: there could be no denying that. Even if the word did not come much into political controversy it was implicit in all labour propaganda. Thus a good deal of troubled controversy was aroused among the faithful by the Pope's encyclical. Was it an *ex cathedra* utterance, not binding on the consciences of those who took their views from Rome? Another encyclical could be quoted, saying that "any free, self-governing community could make whatever laws it pleased for the welfare of the public, provided it did no injustice to any man." But the Cardinal's own organ, backed apparently with his authority, took upon itself at a critical time to use phrases of the letter for the purpose of stampeding Catholic electors from the Labour ranks.

It might have been an embarrassing situation for the Cardinal. He met it at once and openly. The organ in question, he said with detachment, had done excellent service for the church, but this time it had made a serious error. The Pope's pronouncement did not apply to the peaceful, lawful reforms of the Labour Party. Any suggestion that it did was wrong.

And thereafter the editorials of the consecrated organ were carefully supervised.

He had become a venerable figure. In spite of his lack of eloquence (his voice was failing him badly) his words carried weight. The journalists found him "good copy" and kept him in the public eye. There were not so many striking personalities in the national life of the time: besides the Cardinal was approachable, at any rate to those who did not twist his words maliciously for their own ends. He was human, too: he could chuckle: he enjoyed a joke with his whole body.

But naturally he was mainly concerned with the development of his own church. He travelled about, dedicating cathedrals at Ballarat, Bendigo, Goulburn, Bathurst, Hobart, Lismore, Melbourne and Rockhampton. The grain of mustard-seed, sown by Father Jeremiah O'Flynn, the first missionary, had grown amazingly. The Cardinal himself had traced, in his history of the Church in Australia, the different

stages of that growth, emphasizing everything that might give it deeper perspectives or create traditions. There was in the beginning the pioneer O'Flynn, a puzzling and almost legendary figure, a man possessing, as one old convict said, "the sweetest and swiftest tongue of Irish ever I heard," but not otherwise an ideal instrument of grace. An Irishman belonging to a French Cistercian order, he had gone as a young man on a mission to the West Indies, but had made trouble with his abbot, and after some years of semi-independent work had returned to Rome under a cloud. It was this man who had heard the call of the convict-colony in New South Wales where there was no priest. He was examined as to his theological knowledge by Propaganda, and though a little rusty in doctrine was judged suitable enough for missionary work: freed at the same time from all censures he might have incurred and enrolled among the secular clergy, he was also given a small sum to start him off on his enterprise.

But, impetuous as he was, he had met trouble from the beginning. Lord Bathurst had refused him permission to sail for Sydney on the grounds that he was illiterate: a mere excuse, probably, for though he spelt badly that was hardly a test of literacy for a man whose native tongue was Irish, a man, moreover, who for years had been forced to use an Indian and Anglo-French patois for his daily language. Anyhow the prohibition had not stopped the spirited O'Flynn. He had gone to Sydney and presented himself to the surprised Macquarie, pointing out that there were numerous Catholics in the colony, both bond and free, who were deprived of all the sacred offices of their religion. And, though received coldly, he had gone cheerfully about his work till Macquarie, suspecting sedition ("I found likewise that he was tampering with the soldiers of the 48th Regiment") ordered him back to England. Then he had taken refuge in the house of one William Davis, a good Catholic, and remained successfully in hiding till some of Macquarie's bloodhounds found him, in an unguarded moment, and put him on board a homeward-bound boat.

Drama was lent to the story by the fact that so quickly

was O'Flynn spirited away that the Blessed Sacrament was left unattended in the house of William Davis, where for two years the Catholics of Sydney gathered to say their prayers, and where it was later consumed, though whether by Father Therry or a priest from a visiting French warship is not clear. At any rate, "the sacred particles," as Bishop Polding said, "were found quite free from any sign of corruption," and the Catholic Church was started on its Australian journey with a fruitful tradition, a tradition that for many years would provide the seeds for countless sermons in little churches all over the country. Not only that: there were relics. A portion of the cedar press that had held the Blessed Sacrament was made into a small tabernacle for the oratory of the Sisters of Mercy at Pymble: another portion was shaped into the antependium of an altar for St Patrick's College, Manly: the silken cover of the sacred pyx was kept by the Sisters of Charity: and an episcopal throne for the Cathedral Church at Adelaide was shaped from a cedar beam in Davis's house.

But though, in an atmosphere of piety and romantic speculation, the figure of O'Flynn had grown in stature, become as tall as a tree walking, there was difficulty in accepting him as either a martyr or a saint. Undoubtedly Macquarie had treated him harshly, had even been guilty of gross credulity (to call it by its most charitable name) when he reported that the priest had tried to convert the soldiers of the garrison to the Catholic faith by promising to heal their complaints with certain enchantments of his own. Yet there was an unsteadiness about O'Flynn, a lack of discipline, a touch of the adventurer. It showed in his early career, in the casual way he left the Blessed Sacrament unguarded when he was taken off, never apparently mentioning the matter.

And perhaps there was material for an older tradition. Very early in his Australian life the Cardinal had let his imagination play about the voyage of De Quiros, and the Spanish navigator's discovery of what he took to be a great continent in the south. There were difficulties in believing

that the harbour in which De Quiros anchored was Soreto in the New Hebrides: his descriptions were of something far different. There was the large stretch of deep water, the two rivers flowing into it, one as big as the Guadalquivir, the coastal mountains, and the large island at the entrance: not at all like Soreto, but very like Port Curtis on the Australian coast. And why should Torres, after leaving his chief, pass through the strait of his name, in making direct for Manila? That would be his natural route from Port Curtis, but not from the New Hebrides. Even the latitudes in the log of De Quiros must not be taken too seriously, for the navigators of those days often gave false positions for their discoveries in order to confuse their rivals of other nations.

The Cardinal brooded on the matter, looking up all available documents in the libraries on his visits to Rome. Perhaps it was an old brass cannon, found embedded in the sand at Gladstone, that finally convinced him. When it was cleaned an inscription, "Santa Barbara, 1596," could be plainly discerned on it. That was clear enough proof that it came from a foundered Spanish ship of the period, and who would have visited those waters but De Quiros? He became enamoured of his theory, and was ready to defend it passionately with tongue or pen. When he preached to the assembled bishops and distinguished churchmen who gathered at a selected spot on the Gladstone coast in October 1899, it was with the conviction of a man who took it all for granted.

"Here for the first time," he said, "the Mass was celebrated on Australian soil, almost three hundred years ago. The Spanish troops assembled: the royal banner of Spain was unfurled at this very spot: here the culverins thundered and the assembled chaplains of the fleet invoked the blessing of Heaven on the whole of Australia—a blessing which has already borne abundant fruit, as seen in the virtue, the enlightenment and devotion of the sons and daughters of the land."

Later historians have gone to great trouble to prove that there was nothing in the theory, have written at length to

show that De Quiros could not possibly have touched the Australian coast. But even history gives scope for wishful thinking, and there is a suspicion that some of them, influenced by British and secularist sympathies, are reluctant to give the Spanish credit for that first landing. They do not want that vision of the First Mass to be true. Cardinal Moran did want it to be true: he was ready to exert all the great powers of his mind to give it substance. And, as he himself said:

"The world holds nothing more precious or more beautiful than the cultivated intellect of a man enlightened by faith."

THE GEOLOGIST

Edgeworth David

"In a new country like this," Professor Edgeworth David wrote in 1893, "geological thought, like other branches of thought, should be new and strong; and, though having its source in the riper knowledge of men in older countries, it should be free to flow in channels it wears for itself."

The sentence is typical of Edgeworth David, of the mixture of daring and sobriety that marked his character, of the contrast between adventure and the routine of the lecture-room that formed the pattern of his life. Traditional in temper, he was yet a born scientist, that is a man whose imagination dwells as easily in the future as in the past, who believes that thought should be "free to flow in the channels it wears for itself." It was his continual claim for science that it should be allowed to pursue knowledge for its own sake, without consideration of immediate practical gains; but this did not mean that he was content with the atmosphere of the study or the laboratory. And the accidents of life, no less than his own impulses, provided him with a career in which action and speculation were fully mixed.

He had come to New South Wales in 1882, as Assistant Geological Surveyor, a frail young Welshman with little definite notion of what was to be his lifework. He had led a rather dreamy youth; dabbling in literature and philosophy, making pilgrimages to interesting places in the country near his home. But the idea of practical work in a new country attracted him, for he had never thought of geology as the study of dead and bygone things. Besides, an open-air life was necessary for his health.

Luckily he was to get his fill of it. Almost the first serious

work he was set was an examination of the great Hunter River coal-fields. That meant long months of camping, living the ordinary life of a bushman and learning to fend for himself; learning also to adapt himself in general ways to the country he had made his own. But perhaps he did not have the sharper experiences of roughing it, for the young wife he had just married insisted on going with him and looking after his wants.

From the very early days of settlement coal had been mined at Newcastle, also at several places in the Maitland district, a little to the north-east. But these fields had been discovered by chance, as is the way in new countries: now that the first pioneering phase had passed it was necessary to survey them scientifically and gain an idea of their scope. David, after some work in examining the sections of strata on the coastal cliffs, began to visualize the country as it existed in past ages. It seemed plain to him that all the coal-seams had once been connected, and had since been pushed upward, perhaps thousands of feet, by a movement of the earth's surface that had formed a dome. Aeons of erosion had worn off the crest of the dome, and with it the connecting coal-seams, but traces of them should be found around the base. They could only be located and mapped by careful examination of the surrounding country.

This work took most of his time during the following years, and by it he was able to uncover great sources of wealth for the country. But though economic geology was the main interest of the Mines Department it could never be Edgeworth David's sole preoccupation. As the first excitement gradually leaked out of practical work he came back to his original belief that science was the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, the creation, as he said once, of one lighthouse after another that might illuminate increasing areas of the immense surrounding dark. Material advantages might accrue from this passionate activity of scientists: well and good: they were a valuable by-product. But if science directed itself wholly towards merely material ends it would

come to a cul-de-sac, as well as betraying its own divine impulse.

And so it was natural that he should be glad of a University chair when in 1891 it was offered to him, of the chance to inspire students with his own passion for disinterested work. He had found, in talking to miners of the Maitland district, that he could hold an audience: this gave him confidence. And students of the kind he wanted were soon coming to his lectures—one thinks naturally of Griffith Taylor, Mawson and F. R. Browne. David inculcated in them a habit of observation, of continual work in the field. "If one could learn to observe more and not to theorize so much," he used to say. He himself was content with quiet study of fossils and strata to gather the knowledge that would later flower in pictures of the geologic building-up of Australia—of the great sea filled with sandbanks that had once covered its centre, of the volcanic eruptions of the Kimberley district that poured out their floods east and south, of the ice epoch that followed, and so down the ages to Pliocene times.

It was a happy faculty of David that he could popularize knowledge without letting such educational demands affect the purity of his creative work. The Australian imagination is easily touched by geologic theories. So many men have been occupied with mining, at some time or other: so many have been forced to theorize about domes and anti-clines in connexion with their daily work. And probably it is just as enriching to have the mind broadened by a geological perspective as by any other. There is a very short human past in Australia: there is a long and dramatic geological one.

But Edgeworth David's next work took him away from the Australian scene for a time. In 1896 the Royal Society of London financed a Coral Research Committee with the object of sending out an expedition to bore on a coral island and secure further knowledge of the structure of reefs. The expedition, which selected Funafuti, in the Ellis Group, as a site for cutting, was not successful in its main aim of securing a long core of coral, being unable to penetrate beyond a depth of 105 feet. Next year it occurred to David, who

had been a member of the Committee, to organize a second expedition, and he set about securing funds. Because of the reputation he had made they were quickly forthcoming, partly from the Royal Society, but mainly from the citizens of Sydney and the New South Wales Government. David himself got leave from the University to go in charge of it.

There were many difficulties to be faced, the usual exasperations of work in such a remote spot: the impromptu renewal of broken parts in the machinery and the energizing of native workmen who had no understanding of what they were doing. But David was at his best in situations like this. And the final results were important. For years there had been conflicting theories as to the formation of coral atolls. Coral organisms, as is well known, cannot work below a certain depth, and yet many of the reefs rose from deep water in the middle of the ocean. What was the explanation? Darwin had formulated the subsidence theory: he held that each of these reefs was a monument to a buried island: the corals had begun work in the shallow water surrounding the island and had piled up their formations as it gradually sank. The result of Edgeworth David's work was to support this theory. After many misadventures the expedition was successful in boring to a depth of over a thousand feet, and complete cores were sent to London, where on examination shallow-water organisms were found at the lowest depth.

David's research work at Funafuti won him an international reputation and many honours, including a fellowship of the Royal Society. Never had there been such a thorough investigation of a coral reef before. It was more than Darwin himself had hoped for when he piously wished that some rich millionaire would have borings made in the Pacific and Indian atolls and bring home cores for slicing at a depth of from five to six hundred feet.

But such spectacular achievements lay a little away from Edgeworth David's main path. He returned to the more sober routine of the lecture-room and the field-survey. There was his still unfinished work on the Hunter River area: there was his abiding interest in the glacial epochs. Most

of his leisure was spent in little trips to the country around Sydney. He was particularly interested in the Kosciusko plateau, in discovering evidences there of past glacial action, and completing his picture of the past. This continual activity brought a freshness to his lectures.

"The Professor always had something new that he had just observed," said an old student. "It kept us as alert and interested as he was himself."

Perhaps it was his absorption in theories about the glacial epochs that made the idea of Antarctic exploration so attractive to him. In 1906, at an International Science Congress in Mexico City, he had read a paper, which aroused a good deal of comment, about the glacial structures in southern countries that preceded the formation of productive coal-measures. Towards the end of next year there was talk of Lieutenant Shackleton leaving for the Antarctic in a small ship, the *Nimrod*, with the object of making a dash for the South Pole. David gladly accepted an invitation to go with the expedition, and with his usual energy set about raising funds. The Commonwealth Government proposed to grant a sum of £5000, and in debating the matter, the Leader of the Opposition is reported to have said: "If Professor David says he wants the money, that ends it."

So deep an impression had his reputation for disinterested work made on the general mind, even on the minds of politicians!

And so began that spectacular part of his career which has had the spotlight thrown on it, to the exclusion of his more lasting achievements. Perhaps this is putting it too emphatically. From every human point of view there is a fascination about his record at the Antarctic. He was, when he left the *Nimrod*, a middle-aged man of fifty, grey-haired, wiry but frail; a man used to roughing it in a mild way, but unaccustomed to prolonged hardships. He was, in addition, a bad sailor. If he stood up to the rigours of the severe Antarctic climate it was because of something in his character rather than in his constitution. There was, in the first place, his natural sweetness of disposition; he could, as

Shackleton said, "charm a bird off a bough," and his nerves seemed proof against all the jarring contacts of crowded living. But there were even more positive qualities in him. His lively curiosities, his absorption in scientific problems, could make him forget the discomforts of his body. And his will was a seasoned instrument, working almost unconsciously, and reliable as steel.

He was the leader of the little party that first climbed to the crater of Mt Erebus. This impressive mountain, rearing itself aloft from near the western side of Ross Island to a height of 13,000 feet, had brought Ross's memorable voyage of 1841 to a dramatic termination. Though several expeditions had been in its neighbourhood, the mountain had never been attacked, and to Edgeworth David the smoking crater seemed a personal challenge. To tackle it was a dangerous adventure, but in five days of strenuous climbing his party, bitten by frost and half-dazed by blizzards, reached the lip of the crater. A notable achievement, but chiefly valuable as training for the still more arduous work ahead.

This, from the scientific point of view, was the most important part of the venture: a small expedition consisting of Edgeworth David, Mawson, and Mackay was to make a general geological survey of the coast, and in particular to take magnetic observations that would determine the dip and position of the Magnetic Pole. The party had instructions from Shackleton to proceed along the fringing sea-ice as far as the Drygalski Glacier, and from there, if conditions were favourable, to make a dash inland across the plateau in an attempt to reach the Pole itself. It meant several months of hard travelling; it meant a severe test of David's capacity for leadership. He was lucky in that he had two men, Mawson and Mackay, who were as devoted to impersonal ends as himself and who had unbounded faith in him.

The expedition was completely successful. The three men had to fight against time, for the Magnetic Pole proved to be farther inland than they expected it to be; and they knew that if they were not back at their depot on the Drygalski Glacier when the *Nimrod* came round the coast to pick them

up their position would be desperate. Yet the Magnetic Pole was located and the return journey made on time, or nearly so. Exhausted, half-famished, they were calculating their chances of reaching their winter quarters if the struggle had to be continued on foot along the coast when a gun from the *Nimrod* broke the silence that had surrounded them for so long and scattered their fears of final disaster.

Edgeworth David had been encouraged by Shackleton to prolong his stay in the Antarctic, and had felt some compunction at being away so long from his University without leave, but when he came back he found there was no need for uneasiness. He was a popular hero. Largely because of his presence, a good deal of attention had been paid to the exploits of Shackleton's expedition, and the public imagination had been seized by the personality of the shy, diffident professor who had so few of the obvious qualities of a polar explorer. The University shone with the reflected glow of the Magnetic Pole. It had good reason to be tolerant about David's absence from the classroom.

Later on, in the last two years of the war, there was another period of absence that had a fainter connexion with the service of science. At the end of 1915, it was announced in the press that the Commonwealth Government had offered to raise and equip for service at the Front a special corps of geologists and miners. It is probable that this offer was inspired by David himself. His reaction to the war was that of the ordinary man in the street, qualified by the feeling that scientists, at any rate, were all brothers, and that Germany had done more than most countries in the recognition of this. The repetition of such sentiments had made some people question his patriotic soundness; he attracted the attention of local witch-doctors who were smelling out sedition. Hadn't he been particularly friendly with the German visitors to the Scientific Congress of 1914? Hadn't he said that war was a good time to show the strength of the bonds of scientific fellowship? It is a shameful fact that the New South Wales Government instructed its police to investigate such reports.

But even the witch-doctors must have been satisfied when

and miners. That part of his life does not call for any commentary. He faced its dangers and discomforts in much the same spirit as he faced the Antarctic blizzards, and undoubtedly he proved himself a good soldier. But probably other less distinguished men could have selected positions for dug-outs and mine-galleries or decided that the concrete of a German pillbox was made from sand brought illegally over the Dutch frontier from the Scheldt.

Edgeworth David's main work was the exploration of Australia's salient geological features, carried out with sober industry over a period of fifty years. It is recorded in his map, and in the many books and articles he found time to write, and it gives him a place among the pioneers.

"In a new country like this," he had said at the beginning, "geological thought, like other branches of thought, should be new and strong."

He does not seem to have felt any urge to investigate other branches of thought. He was not one of those naturally creative persons who see the world around them with individual eyes. In spite of his scientific cast of mind he was traditional in his ways of thinking and feeling: in most matters outside his special branch of study he accepted the current opinions of the day. And though he had been fond of poetry in his youth, he later formed the habit of seeking refreshment, like other professors, in the stories of P. G. Wodehouse.

Yet the mark he made on Australia is considerable. The maps and studies he left behind are not his only legacy to us; there is also the work of the students he filled with his own passion for the disinterested pursuit of knowledge. And perhaps his influence and his accomplishment opened the popular mind to the brilliant help science could give in the economic development of the country. While he was giving his first lectures Farrer was being encouraged in his wheat experiments, refrigeration was being made possible, and Dr Loir, the nephew and associate of Pasteur, who had been brought from France by the New South Wales Government, was creating his valuable institute on Rodd Island.

THE AGRICULTURAL SCIENTIST

William Farrer

It is a strange fact that during the first century of its development Australia not only failed to grow sufficient wheat for export, but often found it necessary to import grain to feed itself. The early settlers were slow in discovering the potentialities of the soil, and both tradition and science seemed to support their conservatism. Wasn't it established that all the natural granaries of the world lay in northern latitudes; and hadn't Charles Darwin, standing on the open plains of Bathurst, prophesied that they could never grow wheat? For many reasons the balance in our rural economy was tilted against agriculture. It was not merely that the pastoralists, in the early years, held political and economic power and could use it against the farmers in the struggle for land. Even when the farmer had gained possession of good land he was handicapped by having to depend on the limited home-market for his products. And, his living being uncertain, his methods were often sketchy and slipshod. Only a small proportion of the earlier immigrants were trained agriculturists, men who knew there was something more in farming than "tickling the soil with a hoe." Governments, in their eagerness to get the country settled, had often thought it was sufficient to dump people on new areas and leave them to their own devices. And, in a sense, such a policy "worked"; the new arrivals picked up a little knowledge from their neighbours, attached themselves to their holdings, managed to rear and feed their families. But usually it was a wasteful and primitive business, this secondary pioneering. The "cockie" farmer led a meagre and narrow life. He tended to become a type, a general subject for humour: he was the

"Dad" of Steele Rudd and his imitators, the pathetic or comic victim of droughts and his own shiftlessness. It was not till modern processes made possible the shipment of fruits, fat lambs, and dairy products overseas that agriculture came into its own and was pursued with the intelligence that had been devoted to the breeding of fine-woolled sheep.

Yet the oversea marketing of wheat was not dependent on the discovery of the freezing-chamber. If there had been a surplus it could have been exported, like wool, from the first days of settlement. There was, in fact, no surplus. This although a large area of the south-eastern part of the inland and of Western Australia (the region with a rainfall between ten and fifteen inches) is supremely fitted for wheat-growing. What is called the wheat-belt has been assessed by different authorities as from 200,000,000 to 600,000,000 acres. Here the rainfall is not only regular but effective, coming as it does mainly between April and October, the growing-period of the wheat; the air is dry; the weather settled at harvest-time. In general the soils, too, are suitable. And since 1842, when Ridley invented the stripper under the incentive offered in South Australia by Sturt, there has been a good deal done to facilitate cheap production. The stripper was devised for harvesting ripe grain from a standing crop; and in 1876 the stump-jump plough, invented by R. B. Smith, made the breaking of new soil easier, while the "combine" (cultivator and drill) and the harvester have also been produced to suit the special needs of the Australian farmer.

What, then, caused such a lag in wheat-production that for over a century we barely grew enough for our own needs? Partly, of course, there was the factor of interior transport. Even yet not all the wheat-belt is penetrated by railways, and before the coming of the motor-truck it was held unprofitable to cart a crop more than a dozen miles. But the main truth is that wheat-production suffered from the general inattention paid to agriculture. The emphasis was on the pastoral industries. They, after all, paid the national bill of interest due on borrowings from overseas; it was probably expected that they would always do so. The farmer, almost unaided

by science, was largely left to face his own problems of disease and drought.

In 1889 something like a crisis occurred in the wheat-growing industry. The spring had been abnormally wet, and during the flowering period of the wheat the weather was humid and warm, a condition favourable to the growth of rust. By the end of the year it was estimated that the damage done amounted to nearly £3,000,000, and since rust, once established in a wheat-belt, it not easily eradicated the outlook for the future appeared black. The Victorian Government called a Rust-in-Wheat Conference, which was attended by officers of the Agricultural Departments and others interested in wheat-growing: and though this conference achieved no important results in itself, it was instrumental in bringing forward an enterprising farmer who wrote saying that he had "given practical attention to the subject of rust-in-wheat for four years," and that he was then carrying out experiments on his own property at Lambrigg, near Queanbeyan.

This farmer was William Farrer. He was just the man the neglected wheat industry needed: he was a born experimenter, a man with a trained, scientific mind, and he was interested in wheat. Coming to Australia as a young man in poor health he had intended to purchase a sheep-station, and with some idea of gaining "colonial experience" had gone as tutor to a station family. But a speculation in which he lost his money made him give up the idea of sheep-breeding and he turned to the government service, passing his examination as licensed surveyor in 1875. His bent had always been mathematical: at Cambridge he had gained a place among the Wranglers in the Mathematical Tripos: so it is perhaps natural that when he finally retired in 1885 and settled down on his own property he should begin to experiment in much the same way as Mendel did, although it was only late in life that he became aware of Mendel's work.

Yet his interest in rust in wheat seems to have been aroused even earlier than this. He said once that the idea of systematic crossing for rust-resistance was first suggested

to him in the course of a controversy in 1882 with the *Australasian*, which had insisted that such crossing was not possible. At that time Farrer must have been still a surveyor, with no practical knowledge of agriculture. His concern with the matter was, in fact, intellectual: it did not grow out of his own situation. There was in him, as in all scientists, an impersonal twist that made the solution of a problem its own reward. Quiet and reserved, he delighted in newspaper controversy more than in social intercourse, but if he had entered the *Australasian* controversy casually there could be no easy withdrawal. His life-work was discovered for him.

In 1898 he was engaged by the New South Wales Department of Agriculture as Wheat Experimentalist, and he continued as active officer till the day of his death. The Rust-in-Wheat Conferences that had been begun in 1890 were continued annually till 1896, and at all of them Farrer had been a prominent figure, reading papers and joining in the discussion. He was thus known to those in authority, as well as to those who were to be his fellow-officers. For himself he was glad of the appointment, since, though the salary was small, it widened his scope for experiment. He could travel about from one district to another, observe what kinds of wheat grew best in particular kinds of soil, use all the resources of the department in what had been subject before to the limitations of a private hobby.

Farrer's earlier investigations had shown him that rust-resistance was a variable quality, and could be increased by breeding. His first wheat, Bobs (the cross of which was made the year he joined the department) was in cultivation on a large scale by farmers four or five years later. But he was not solely preoccupied with the question of rust. The terms of his appointment laid down that he should continue and enlarge on the experiments laid down by his predecessor, Dr Cobb, with the aim of finding wheats that were not only rust-resisting, but possessed of good milling qualities and adaptable to the varied climates, from the moist areas of the coast to the arid regions of the inland. In general, Australian wheat was of poor quality; drought, disease, and slack

farming had done their worst with it. It was particularly lacking in gluten-content, a characteristic then prized by millers as affecting the strength or baking quality of the flour. A contract from the French Government a year or so before Farrer's appointment had stipulated that the gluten-content should not be less than 9 per cent—1 per cent more than the best wheat harvested in New South Wales at the time. Here, then, was another problem to his hand.

One of the obstacles to evolving a rust-resisting grain had been the conservatism of the millers. These preferred to deal with the type then in general cultivation—soft, white wheats with whose behaviour in the mill they were familiar; and they had a distinct prejudice against the harder, strong-flour varieties it was Farrer's object to breed. It was this resistance to change on the part of the millers that, more than anything else, had rendered the efforts of the Rust-in-Wheat Conference abortive. But in 1896 the millers were forced to import wheat for local consumption, and this largely proved to be of the hard, strong-flour variety. They had to adjust their machinery to its texture, their minds to the fact that it was the type likely to suit Australian conditions.

Before very long Farrer's experiments had opened up more hopeful prospects for the Australian wheat-grower. His new types of wheat (Bobs, Comeback, Federation) were being sown widely with the most satisfactory results. Yet he was still a pioneer, working very often with imperfect tools. It was important, for instance, that he should be able to obtain reliable information concerning the milling quality of the small samples (often not more than a few ounces) that constituted his entire harvest of new wheats after two or three seasons. How was it to be done? There were no miniature mills to help him out, but a friend of his was lucky enough to obtain a couple of rolls, such as were used in grinding small quantities of wholemeal, and with the help of a Sydney miller they devised a small mill that could imitate fairly well the operations of a large one. Their flour had not the high-class texture and bloom of the miller's product, but they could

determine the important points of strength, gluten-content, and colour, as well as the proportions of bran, pollard, and flour.

In his field-work Farrer was experimenting on lines then comparatively novel. They were based on the analagous case of the animal kingdom—that when parents not closely similar are united, certain of the progeny inherit some of their characteristics almost entirely from one parent, combined with a few characteristics from the other; while the majority are intermediate. And the greater difference between the parents the greater variety among the offspring. Thus if a hundred were taken, "out of this number," said Farrer, "I would expect that there would be one or two—say, one—which had inherited in a very high degree, possibly in as high degree as the parents themselves possessed them, the qualities we are seeking to secure from both parents."

There then remained the question of fixing the desirable types. In this Farrer seems to have been lucky.

"In your letter," he wrote to Professor Biffen of Cambridge in 1905, "you speak of the old bugbear of fixing varieties. This work, for the last twelve or fourteen years, has given me no trouble whatever. It seems to me, from what I can see of Mendel's theory of heredity, that the consideration I then gave to the matter of fixing varieties, led me to adopt the system which, for all practical purposes, Mendel's theory indicates as being the best. . . . I certainly had not Mendel's theory to go upon."

But the scientific side of Farrer's work is a matter for specialists; what is interesting to every one is its practical result. There is, first of all, the question of quality. When Farrer first began his experiments Australian wheat was, as has been mentioned, notably deficient in gluten-content, the best harvested in New South Wales only reaching 8 per cent. To-day it runs as high as 12·9 per cent in a dry year, and rarely falls below 10 per cent. This, combined with other improvements due to Farrer, has had its effect on the export trade. Once our wheat was sold on the world-market at a

discount of from two to three shillings per quarter, compared with the grain of other countries. Now it can meet the exports of these countries on level terms, and is at times sold at a premium over all. Farrer's work has, in fact, added several millions a year to the value of the crop.

In heightening productivity it has been no less important. The general cultivation of such types as Federation, Canberra, and others, has raised the average yield per acre by at least two bushels all over the country, an increase that is of the utmost importance, for in many cases it represents the margin of profit and has induced farmers to bring more land under the plough. The confines of the wheat-belt have been extended. Whether this will ultimately prove a good thing may be questioned. Probably in the more arid areas land has been broken that should have been left as a protection against the encroaching desert. And the possibilities of cheap farming have led to the richest areas being the least progressive. Instead of the farms in these districts being reduced by subdivision they are, as Professor Cherry of Victoria has pointed out, steadily growing larger by aggregation. Whenever a farm comes into the market it is bought by wealthy owners adjoining it; cultivation becomes less intensive, while population drifts away and local trades decline. But these shifts and anomalies are inevitable in a country that still has a pioneering frontier and land-policies dictated by established interests.

Farrer's work has affected the country in many ways. It has given a stimulus to scientific agriculture, quickened the interest, not only of government departments but of farmers, in modern methods of approaching the problems of the soil. It has even changed the colour of the landscape, particularly in northern Victoria, where the light gold of the old varieties of wheat has given place to the dark bronze of Federation. And it has lifted Australia in general from the position of a non-exporter of wheat to a place among the Big Four who control the world-market.

Farrer, this quiet, modest man, was well aware of what he

had done, but there is no record that he ever claimed particular credit for it. In his attitude to life he seems to have never strayed from that spirit of impersonal curiosity with which, as the pioneer of a new generation of farmers, he examined the dusty, reddish-brown spores on the leaves and ears of his wheat at Lambrigg.

THE WRITER

Henry Lawson

"LAWSON is an artist—not fully recognized as such by even his Australian readers," said Professor Emile Saillens in a preface to a French translation of his work. "They have keen appreciation of the local subject matter and atmosphere of his stories in particular, but the hidden might of his art is still to be revealed."

This is as true now, unluckily, as when it was written twenty-five years ago. There has always been something a little furtive and shamefaced about our appreciation of Lawson. We have been inclined to regard him as the fool of the family; the inspired fool, perhaps, human and even lovable in the home, but not quite fit to meet the critical eyes of the outside world. Those homespun clothes, those mumbled intimacies! What a poor showing he would make in the company of writers overseas, those successful writers of the day who know so instinctively what good form is, in life and literature!

Lawson's very popularity has, in fact, stood in the way of a full recognition of his genius. It has been taken for granted by the pundits that his appeal lay in the "local" subject-matter of his work, and that this quality somehow diminished its importance. As if any subject-matter of which a writer of fiction could treat were not "local" somewhere! Or as if the test of a writer were not the power to penetrate life deeply but to skim lightly over the greatest possible area of it.

Lawson's experience of life was narrow, it is true, limited early by deafness and a descending cloud: but it had an intensity that was due partly to the nature of his gifts and partly to the circumstances of his upbringing. He was brought

up on one of those abandoned goldfields that were a familiar feature of New South Wales in the sixties—Pipeclay, near Mudgee, a handful of tumble-down huts in a gully pitted with digger-holes—ringbarked trees on the ridges around, goats feeding among the rusted tins of the flat, and everything speaking of a wave of human activity that had spent itself. It was not a place to stimulate a cheerful outlook upon the world: Lawson's earliest impressions were of decay and desolation. His father had been an unsuccessful miner, a Scandinavian who had deserted his ship in Melbourne and followed the swarming crowds to Ballarat and Bendigo. Now he was struggling for a living, like so many of those disappointed immigrants. Quiet, inward-looking, Peter Larsen was typical of his race, the son of a family of schoolmasters and sailors.

"He was well educated in his own language," says Lawson, "could understand and appreciate German poetry, knew French well enough to understand a Frenchman, was a fine penman, and wrote good English. I don't believe that a kinder man in trouble, or a gentler nurse in sickness, ever breathed."

The mother, Louisa Lawson, was Australian-born, a spirited, restless woman who was never perfectly in tune with the man she married. She had no domestic gifts: she was quite unsuited to be the wife of a hard-up settler, a silent one at that, who liked going off alone in the evenings and brooding over his pipe. Louisa Lawson's bent was literary and social: she wrote verse, she had rebellious notions about the rights of women. Mary Wollstonecraft was her heroine. She wanted to be a pioneer, not of the soil, but of the movement for women's emancipation, and though she had been brought up in the bush, in a hand-to-mouth way, she could never settle down to a life that seemed to her swamped by mean drudgery. Later on she broke away from it, coming to Sydney and founding a women's paper.

It was a queer home for a boy to grow up in, haunted by insecurity and an atmosphere of mute conflict. Luckily there were books—Dickens, Marryat, Bret Harte, and even Don

Quixote—the right kind of food for a growing boy. There were also stories that brought the imagination nearer home; for instance, Marcus Clarke's *For the Term of His Natural Life*, to be read serially as it passed through the *Australian Journal*. And outside there was the fugitive life of Pipeclay, with its odd characters—the Irish teacher of the bush school, the old miners pondering over mullock-heaps, the gaunt, sun-dried women trying to raise a few flowers from the dust of their backyards. There were even ghosts. An abandoned goldfield is rich in ghosts. There was the ghost of old Robertson in his deserted slab hut: the ghost of Joe Swallow at the foot of Sapling Gully: the many ghosts of Chinamen that flitted about the worked-out shafts. It was a small world, but populated, as such worlds are, by figures that loomed as large as mountains on the skyline.

Lawson's talent lay in the intensity with which he could see this world, and the intimacy with which he could reproduce it. It was not always the literal world of Pipeclay. The family had many shifts and changes, now moving to Gulgong, another abandoned goldfield, now taking up a selection on one of the treed ridges whose grey, unfruitful soil might as well have remained unbroken by the plough. But these changes only operated in a small area, and the kind of people remained virtually the same. It was poor country and they were always struggling to pay their debts to the storekeeper. An atmosphere of defeat hung about them. Lawson's father, for awhile, kept the family going by securing building-contracts, and working with him the boy learnt to use a paint-brush on weatherboard walls, a craft that was his only asset when, later on, he went to earn his living in Sydney.

The Sydney into which he was drawn was as drab to him as the country he had left behind. He was seventeen, shy, lonely, sensitive because of his deafness. It had come upon his suddenly, this deafness, when he was nine, and no treatment had been able to cure it. Naturally it was a handicap to him as a writer, denying him full participation in the life about him, shutting out that racy dialogue of pub and workshop that might have enriched his stories. But it was some

time before he could make leisure for writing. Living in third-rate lodging-houses, sleeping with an alarm-clock on the sheet of tin by his bed so that he should not miss the workman's train, fuddling himself with Latin and history at a night-school, he put in some difficult, adolescent years. Jobs were hard to secure, and temporary when found.

"I worked about in various private shops," says Lawson, "and did a bit of house-painting, too. I knew what it was, when I was out of work for a few days in winter, to turn out shivering, and be down at the *Herald* office at four o'clock on bitter mornings, and be one of the haggard group striking matches, and running them down the 'wanted' columns on the damp sheets posted outside. I knew what it was to tramp long distances, and be one of a hopeless crowd of applicants. I knew what it was to drift about the streets in shabby and patched clothes, and feel furtive and criminal-like."

This is the experience, in country and town, upon which Lawson drew when he came to write. The period in which he had grown up was one of discontent and disillusionment. Where was the Utopia the democrats of John Dunmore Lang's day hoped to create through free access to the land and an adult franchise? There was little sign of it: the conditions of older countries were reproducing themselves. In the country there was the wealthy station-owner with his carefully-chosen holding and the struggling selector trying to make a living from the barren ridge: in town the early birds were also firmly established. The mansions of Potts Point and Cremorne made a sharp contrast with the slums of Waverley and the Rocks. And people were not blinded to such glaring inequalities by the mists of tradition. They knew how the fortunes had been made: it was difficult to persuade them that such fortunes were the inevitable reward of honesty and thrift. What popular history was written (that published by the *Bulletin*, for instance), supported their conviction that the past of the country had been a shady one, and that the social pretensions of the families who had emerged from it successfully were not valid.

Ideas of revolt were in the air: but revolt against what?

There was a good deal of confusion about the causes of poverty and insecurity among the mass of the people. It is to be seen in Lawson's first writings, in "Faces in the Street" and "The Song of the Republic," which burn with a desire for some "red revolution" that would make the country over and make it better. Naturally such verses aroused an immediate response: they expressed with heat and vigour what was but a dim exasperation in many minds. Lawson was accepted as a popular poet, a voice of the masses. His couplets were quoted up and down the country, around the camp-fire, in the shearing-shed, wherever two or three workmen were gathered together. This, it was felt, was the ordinary bushman articulate. This was literature arising from the people themselves.

But verse was not Lawson's true medium. He wrote it because it was the habit of the day, and the easiest way of communicating political and social ideas. It also gave free play to one side of his talent. Apart from the vigour of his writing there was a novelty about his point of view. He was the proletarian, sardonically pricking the bladder of breezy optimism with which "Banjo" Paterson and others wrote about life in the bush. Instead of the "vision splendid of the sunlit plains extended" he had seen the marauding goats picking their way across the desolation of Pipeclay Flat. But there was none of the intensity of poetry in his rhymes, no evocative words or images that suggested more than their literal meaning. These verses tended to be rhetorical if they were serious, to lead the mind outward rather than inward. And sometimes they were merely humorous stories done in lolloping ballad-form. Lawson's real genius was for prose; in brief, unemphatic sketches he could reveal with subtlety and humour the world he had been familiar with in boyhood. The quality of this writing was evident from the beginning. No one who read "His Father's Mate," his first story, could doubt that here was a man who was looking at life with his own eyes, a man with personal vision and the craft of a natural artist in rendering what he saw.

His characters were always people he had known. There

were the figures of Pipeclay, especially his father, that quiet man he remembered as a youngster always going off on some mysterious mission with an axe on his shoulders: there were the youths of the city carriage-shops, like Arvie Aspinall, sleeping uneasily with his alarm-clock at his head. In penetrating such lives Lawson opened a new window for the readers of his day. Here was reality; here was the unmistakable accent of a man speaking to his own people. It was not a robust art, but it was genuine; Lawson did not need to be taught to write. Many writers only find their own style after a painful effort in sloughing the false skin of accepted convention, but Lawson fell into a natural stride from the beginning. Some of his earliest sketches, like "His Father's Mate" and "The Drover's Wife" are among his best work.

Gradually he extended his range a little. When Gresley Lukin edited the *Boomerang* in 1891 he drew Lawson to Brisbane, and though the paper did not last long it brought the young writer into contact with some men of ideas—A. G. Stephens, Gresley Lukin, Lane himself. And soon after the paper's death Lawson went tramping for six months through the west of Queensland and New South Wales, his first real experience of life in the Outback. Those were the days when unionism was in its first stage of lusty growth. To the shearers and bushworkers it was not merely a means of winning economic rights: it had something (as suggested by "The Union Buries Its Dead") of the fervour of a religion in it. A religion that was active and militant. The spirit of brotherhood was cultivated within the fold, but there was fire and sword for the heretic, the blackleg. Naturally the pastoralists, accustomed from the early days to reserves of docile labour, felt this growing unionism to be a menace, and they were secretly gathering their forces to crush it. The shadow of impending conflict was over the country.

But to the unionists, buoyed up by a newly-discovered sense of strength and solidarity, there could be only one end to such a conflict. The tides of life rode high in them. Contact with these groups of confident, upstanding workers was a new experience for Lawson. In his early days in Sydney, looking

for jobs in carriage-shops or railway-yards, running down the advertisement columns by the light of a match, he had seen life merely from the point of view of a lonely and isolated youth. The note he stressed had been one of pathos and defeat. It was a false note in this company. Lawson inhaled robustness from the air about him, and for awhile his work became stronger and more ebullient. The tendency toward a morbid brooding on his own troubles, on "the man he might have been," was exorcised for awhile by comradeship with these men who sank everything personal in the common struggle. His gift of humour was allowed full play: his sense of character broadened. In these shearers and bushmen he saw, as Francis Adams had before him, the real Australian, a type moulded by the country itself, by the itinerant nature of the work it forced on them, by the character of its stubborn soil. One had to cultivate a sardonic humour, a "stiff upper lip," to meet the vicissitudes of life outback. Nature was a bitch-goddess: you could not trust her. She covered the plains one year with flowers and the next with bones.

Yet there remained a steady link between men—"mateship," the creed of the new unionism. The test of a man was loyalty to his mates, in the face of natural disasters or economic oppression. Lawson became the poet of this creed: it provided matter for his rhymes and, more effectively, for his stories. His point of view could never be one of assumed detachment: it was fixed definitely in the mind of the casual swagman or bushman. The enemy was the waterless track or the grasping, tight-handed boss, though it was sometimes recognized that the boss was only a shadow of the absentee owner or group of owners, for even in the nineties the pastoral properties had begun to pass from the hands of the squatters who pioneered them, into those of banks and syndicates.

During the nineties Lawson published several volumes of stories, all of them good, all of them rich in human value. Little vignettes of men at work or on the track, studies of types, dramas of the selection and the back street. They were done with a brilliant economy, reaching a perfection of form through sheer sincerity of feeling. Such sketches, for in-

stance, as "Water Them Geraniums," and "They Wait on the Wharf in Black," seem the product of a delicate and conscious art, yet it is probable that Lawson wrote them as simply as if he were telling the incident to a mate. "You invent too much," Tolstoy told Gorky as a youth. We can be sure Lawson invented little. His stories have the queer, unmistakable movement of life, its inconsequence, its slight variation from patterns already familiar. They are unlike those of other famous writers of the short story—Tchekov, Kipling, Guy de Maupassant. The faithfulness of Lawson to his own experience was enough in itself to give them originality, for the imagination easily falls into ruts, but life has endless diversity, never repeating its patterns exactly.

It is possible that Lawson would have been a greater writer if the influences around him had been favourable for his development. They were not. Archibald, his editor, could impress on him the virtue of brevity and directness, but could not extend the range of his ideas. The *Bulletin* itself was limited in its scope. And though the Bohemian literary world of those days had a stimulus of its own, especially in contrast with the commercialism and snobbery around, it was not the place, with its boozing and good-fellowship, for a man to work in any other key than the minor one. Yet, apart from there being nothing in the life around to develop him (except that spirit of social rebellion that began to die away in the nineties), Lawson's own nature set a limit to his growth. He was slightly lacking in those intellectual qualities that are necessary to give structure and space to great work. He depended too much on the strength and spontaneity of his feeling. When this source of creation dried up or became muddied he wrote badly, with his left hand, as it were, repeating old themes in a maudlin and ineffectual way.

And so the last twenty years of his life followed a descending curve. After a couple of years in England, he returned to become a familiar figure on the streets of Sydney—a ghost-like figure in the busy throng, deaf, abstracted, increasingly shaky. The dark eyes, so luminous and penetrating in Longstaff's portrait, became glittery and opaque, the sensitive spirit

took refuge behind a challenging grin, the lean frame relied for support on a stick. One can observe the change in Low's brilliant sketch of him, done during the war-years. It was a caricature of the early Lawson: it was the business man's conception of a broken-down poet. He continued writing, but his work lost direction and intensity. Verse came easier to him than prose, those loose metres with long-drawn lines that mark a primrose path to the everlasting bonfire.

But his early work remains, and holds its own with any other in our literature for seriousness and purity. What Professor Saillens has called the "might" of Lawson's art has not been recognized, but it has had great effect. It is no small thing for Australia that the most popular writer of his day should also have been its greatest one. Lawson gave eyes to people who otherwise would never have looked at the life around them with penetration and understanding. In his brief, unemphatic sketches he made Australians, for the first time, aware of themselves.

THE ORATOR

Alfred Deakin

THE name of Alfred Deakin will always be associated with the early years of the Commonwealth. He was one of the most tireless advocates of Federation, one of the chief moulders of the Constitution, and later (as an expert manipulator of parliamentary forces), the man largely responsible for setting the Commonwealth on the general course it has since followed. It was during his second administration (the first stable administration the new Parliament had known, 1905-8) that Protection was firmly established, the idea of an Australian Navy outlined, all the typical national policies adumbrated, from the fixing of the capital at Canberra to the insistence on a minimum standard of living that found expression in the "Harvester wage." Few of the ideas with which Deakin was identified originated with him, but he was a born expositor, an orator, a man to whom words themselves had the excitement of thought: and in a period when most politicians were sunk in provincial jealousies, the airy elevation of his mind, the power of his eloquence, were enough to mark him out as a national leader.

It is no slight to call Deakin a man of words. In the nature of things politicians can rarely be originators: ideas come to birth in obscurity, they gradually spread, it is only when they have gained a certain support that the time becomes ripe, as the saying goes, for public men to take them up and give them political form. The first years of the Commonwealth were marked by a confused struggle between groups and interests: in Parliament there were "three elevens in the field," none of them making a unified team. Even the Labour Party was divided on the fiscal question, and the other parties repre-

sented sections of the farmers, pastoralists, manufacturers, and importers that had not yet found a common front. It was Deakin's role to simplify the issues, to concentrate attention on the purposes for which the country had federated, to win support for policies that could be regarded as national. He was able to fill it admirably. Then Australia was making its first contacts with the outside world. Deakin was the man (as he showed by his speech on the Immigration Restriction Bill) to guarantee that such contact should be made without too great a shock to the sensitiveness of foreigners.

He had won his political spurs early. Born in Melbourne in 1856, the son of a small contractor, he might be supposed to have grown up in an environment where politics was the chief subject of discussion. But the echoes of Eureka, the first excitement about self-government, had probably died away before he began to be aware of what was going on around him. His own bent was vaguely literary. From what was raw, crude and vital in the Victoria of his boyhood he turned to books and his own fantasies. He read Carlyle and Pope's *Homer*, he wrote verse and essays, he spent his school holidays in the Public Library. Later he was attracted by spiritualism. There was something in his dark, mesmeric eyes, in his fluid, receptive nature that marked him out as one peculiarly sensitive to occult forces. His biographer, Professor Murdoch, speaks of "the steady and growing persistence with which he went his own way, in an ideal world of his own, unsubdued, and almost untouched by the world of external realities." And H. B. Higgins tells of finding him as a student, talking volubly to a group of four or five other students in the University quadrangle, trying to persuade them that their studies were useless and unnecessary since Herbert Spencer had arrived with a key to the gates of knowledge.

It was David Syme, the dour old democrat of the *Age*, who first set his feet on the political path. Deakin, after teaching for awhile and being admitted to the Bar, was anxious to supplement his earnings by journalistic work: he proposed to Syme that he should contribute articles on art and literature to his paper, and strange to say Syme (who usually had no

patience with such trifles) agreed to give him a trial. At the time Deakin was a tall, distinguished-looking young man, swarthy, intense, whose burning dark eyes and unusual gift of words had convinced Syme's brother that he was a "genius." And though the *Age* was naturally distrustful of genius it had its uses for a young man with a gift of words. Deakin was allowed to write leading articles on general topics, while David Syme connived at his political education. To Syme (who for twenty years had been preaching with solemn persistence the advantages of the tariff) this meant Protection: and it was not difficult to wean Deakin from his vague attachment to the ideas of Cobden and John Stuart Mill. In a little while he was writing political articles that completely satisfied his mentor. And in 1879, when the seat of West Bourke became vacant, Syme persuaded the Liberal Party that Deakin, although only a young man of twenty-two, was the best candidate it could find.

Such was Deakin's introduction to politics. But his entry on the popular side was not entirely due to Syme. He was encouraged in his support of the democratic administration of Graham Berry by the fact that Professor Pearson, whom he warmly admired, was whole-heartedly on the side of this fiery suburban grocer who was trying to overthrow the powers of the Upper House. Pearson, with his eyeglass, his fastidiousness, his Oxford detachment, was using his voice and his pen on behalf of Berry and the *Age*. And, as Deakin wrote afterwards:

"If a scholar and a gentleman, a historian and a publicist like Pearson was prepared to become their ally, it was plain that I need have no hesitation to following the same flag."

That election was a turning-point in his life. He won the seat, but there had been a shortage of ballot-papers at one polling-place, and though he was legally elected he decided to resign on a point of honour. The resignation could only be effective after he had been sworn in, and so it was made in dramatic circumstances that carried his name through the country. He had made a brilliant speech in moving the Address-in-Reply: even the members of his own party were

astonished when he announced that he was surrendering his advantage and allowing a fresh poll.

"If I am a representative of the majority of the electors of West Bourke I will be returned again: if I am not I have no right to be here."

Alas, one must record the ironic fact that the gesture counted for nothing. When the new poll was declared he was found to have lost by fifteen votes.

But such spectacular chivalry and honesty were bound to have their effect in the long run. Within two years he had gained his place in Parliament, and from then till the formation of the Commonwealth no Ministry was formed in Victoria without his being asked to take a portfolio.

It is a record that speaks loudly for Deakin's qualities; a little more softly of his defects, or the lack of any important issue in the political life of the time. The long quarrel between the Upper House and Lower had been settled by a compromise that was really a democratic defeat. People were tired of an argument that had become merely abstract. They were satisfied to let the Upper House keep its powers till it blocked some measure in which they were interested. The tariff was now a fixed institution in Victoria; but it was sufficiently untried to let the working-class believe that it would finally create an industrial paradise. This although revelations were continually being made about the sweating of unorganized workers. Labour was still unrepresented in Parliament: no economic conflicts separated the two parties in the House. What was there to divide them? They both believed in the policy of "Peace, Progress, and Prosperity" which had been proclaimed from the housetops and was supported by loan-money from overseas. One question might have raised a racket in the early eighties, and that was the subsidizing of Catholic schools; but when two Catholic members of Berry's Ministry tried to impose this policy on him, Deakin persuaded him to seek a coalition with the other side, and though the actual coalition was not carried out till three years later, the proposal to subsidize Catholic schools was checked.

Thus early were Deakin's talents as a negotiator called into

play; together with his oratory, his power of exposition, they formed a strong political asset, and a heavy drain was made on them before Federation was accomplished—on the one for platform work in popularizing the idea, and on the other for reconciling different points of view in the framing of the Constitution. He was an adept at phrasing a formula, at exploring the No-man's Land where extremes might be supposed to meet. For the small beer of day-to-day politics he had little taste. He shrank from investigating industrial questions or debating the details of a tariff. One can gauge his remoteness from the social realities of the time by the fact that, although democratic by instinct, he insisted on the military being called out during the maritime strike of 1890, dramatically impressing on other ministers that Melbourne was in danger from the mob.

Easily his most valuable work as a Victorian politician was done when he was President of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the methods of water-conservation in countries where irrigation was being successfully practised. A drought had ruined many farmers in northern Victoria; it looked as if promising areas would have to be deserted or left unbroken by the plough. Deakin's inquiries took him to America, to Egypt, finally to India: and his first report (that on the United States) was regarded so highly by the American Government that it was reprinted as a textbook for the use of agriculturists and students.

But it is questionable whether his heart was in this work: it was a job assigned him by the chances of politics, and he carried it out with the brilliant thoroughness that was due to its importance and to his own character. He was really more at home in the role of Victoria's representative at the Colonial Conference of 1887; and though the conference was comparatively a formal one, a summoning of vassal-states to hear imperial policy expounded, the independent stand taken by Deakin shattered the atmosphere of condescension with which Salisbury had opened it. It was not that he was aggressive or anti-British. Naturally suave, he had none of the rugged republicanism of some of the New South Wales politicians,

like Dibbs or John Robertson, and he was probably more imperialist at heart than Salisbury himself. But through his early admiration for Higinbotham he had formed a dislike of the patronizing attitude of the Colonial Office, a dislike that experience had sharpened; and his pride was pricked when Salisbury, bland enough while the reporters were present, assumed in secret conference the old air of bored, aristocratic man-of-the-world, giving good advice to his wards. The matters discussed by Salisbury were defence, the impossibility of preferential tariffs, and the interference of Australia in the New Hebrides question. Most of the delegates, though disagreeing with the great man, pulled their forelocks deferentially, but Deakin answered his speech with warmth and occasional flashes of irony. It was not that there was any profound wisdom in his reply; it represented a view of world-politics narrower on the whole than Salisbury's: but Deakin's lack of self-consciousness in debate, his capacity to meet Salisbury on equal terms, went a long way in destroying the old attitude to "the Colonies."

Deakin had made an impression in London: he was different from the kind of "colonial" politician British ministers were used to dealing with: he was adult, assured, capable of quietly holding his own. Men like Morley, Dilke, Chamberlain, found him an interesting figure. He, in turn, was not over-impressed by their reputations or their conversational brilliance. It is significant that he picked out Frank Harris, then editor of the *Fortnightly*, as one of the most interesting men he met during this visit. Even the magnificence of London society failed to overwhelm him. He was delighted to find, he wrote to his wife, that at its best it had so little that was tempting to him. It was made up of "just the people we know, a little more polished and more pleasant. . . ." Obviously he had a centre of his own, a fixed notion of where his allegiance lay, and in spite of the feverishness of his mind he was untroubled by vague ambitions. At thirty he could refuse a knighthood, quietly and as a matter of course, in spite of the pressure of Lord Holland.

This visit to the Conference of 1887 was only an episode

in Deakin's early political life, but the experience it gave him of British politics and London society stood him in good stead when he was sent as Victorian delegate in 1899 to see the Commonwealth Bill through the House of Commons. For more than ten years Deakin had taken only a perfunctory interest in Victorian politics, but had devoted his unbounded energies and his remarkable gift of oratory to popularizing the idea of Federation. The Conference of 1887 had shown him how difficult it was for Australia to make itself heard when it spoke with half a dozen different voices. There was confusion of tongue, even when there was singleness of will. The achievement of national unity, and in the quickest time possible, seemed more important to him than anything else. He was impatient at some of the haggling and splitting of hairs that marked the Convention of 1897-8 which had been popularly elected to frame a constitution. Little rooted himself in local affairs, he could not understand the concern about provincial rights or checks against centralization. His own role in drafting the Bill was mainly conciliatory. To his nervous, feverish temperament the cool deliberation of fellow-delegates like Isaacs and Higgins, who were willing to spend time in order to get the most liberal constitution possible, looked like sheer sabotage.

But when the Commonwealth Act was finally drafted and accepted by a majority of the new States, Chamberlain intimated that some amendments were needed before it could pass the House of Commons. This involved delay and (to Deakin) the sacrifice of autonomous principles. The Australian people had agreed to the Constitution after long thought and argument about the terms: who but themselves had the right to alter it? When Chamberlain asked that envoys should be sent to London to consult about the Bill he was unwilling to go, and only did so under pressure. He was determined, like his fellow-envoys, Barton and Kingston, to surrender nothing, to fight for the whole Bill and make no compromise.

As a matter of fact the amendments finally prepared by Chamberlain (whatever may have been his original inten-

tion) were comparatively slight. They were mainly concerned with the right of appeal to the Privy Council in disputes about constitutional powers. But the delegates saw in Chamberlain's attitude a determination to assert his own authority, and that of the British Parliament. The great apostle of imperialism was then at the height of his power. The Boer War was in full swing: he had a large and docile majority in the House of Commons. Admittedly he was in a position to alter the Bill drastically.

The argument between Chamberlain and the Australian envoys went on for some months, conducted mainly by diplomatic notes: and it was largely through Deakin that agreement was reached. Suave but determined, he could prick Barton from his lethargy and subdue the fiery aggressiveness of Kingston. For Chamberlain he had respect but no temperamental liking.

"He assuredly was, and represented, the average Briton of the middle class, without a single extra or original quality, but with all the faculties of the business man raised to their highest power, applied to public affairs and concentrated upon one end."

Certainly the most formidable man, Deakin admitted, that the Australians could have met. It was a triumph that, lacking full support from some of their own Parliaments, they could persuade him to accept the Bill, with merely a slight change in the clause he objected to, which was re-drafted to provide that on constitutional questions, as between the Commonwealth and any State or States, no appeal to the Privy Council should be permitted unless by the consent of the Executive Governments concerned.

Deakin, through his brilliant representation of Australia on this occasion, had reached his full height as a national figure. He was the man who most definitely symbolized the new Commonwealth in the public mind. It hardly mattered that when the first Commonwealth Parliament was called together, Sir William Lyne, an opponent of federation, was asked by the Governor-General to form a ministry. No ministry could be formed without Deakin, and Deakin let it be known that

he would serve under Barton alone. Loyalty prompted him to nominate the man who had been leader of the Federal Convention, and when in a couple of years Barton retired to the High Court Bench, Deakin stepped into the place which had really been his from the beginning: for there can be no doubt that he was the guiding spirit of Barton's administration.

During most of the remaining years of his political life he was hampered by having no strong party behind him. The second Parliament (that of 1903) found him between two stools; he was reduced to seeking an alliance either with the Free Trade party under Reid, or with Labour. A Protectionist first and foremost he could find little ground for agreement with the one: from the other he was cut off by his dislike of the caucus, and by his feeling that Labour merely represented a class. His conception of politics was romantic and idealistic. He could not accept the idea that parties were based on economic interests: he preferred to think of them as seeking their sanctions in abstract theories of social justice or national well-being. Australia was a unit, fortunate in having resources that could keep her standards of living above those of less happy lands. He believed that by the "new" Protection the manufacturer could be safeguarded against the competition of those countries and the working-class assured of some of the profits. His administration of 1905-8, which was supported by the Labour Party, legislated along these lines, establishing the Arbitration Court and setting up an economic structure that seemed (till the depression of 1930) solid and permanent.

But the Imperial Conference of 1907 drew Deakin into what, after all, must be considered a sidepath. He had for many years believed in an Empire united by preferential tariffs: but had recognized that, since England had a fixed Free Trade policy, the question could only be fittingly raised by her. With some such remark he brushed the matter aside in 1887, and it represented his general view that it was dangerous for one part of the Empire to interfere with the concerns of another. It was surprising, then, that he went to the Conference in 1907, as a fervent propagandist for the

idea of imperial trade. Not only did he advocate it at the Conference: when his fellow-delegates, Botha and Laurier, looked upon it coldly and Winston Churchill replied definitely that this particular door was "banged, barred, and bolted," he carried his case to the English public outside, speaking at improvised meetings all over the country, to the delight of the Conservative Opposition and the embarrassment of the Liberal Government. His energy was never more daemonic or his eloquence more glowing. He impressed thousands of listeners by his oratory, if not by his arguments.

It is difficult to recognize the real Deakin (the cool, suave antagonist Chamberlain encountered in 1899) in this crusading figure who whirled from banquet to political meeting in a giddy round of engagements as if he were conscious of bearing some spiritual message. Perhaps the real Deakin was slipping into the background. He never quite recovered from his oversea campaign in 1907. His grasp of detail relaxed, his interest in political affairs lessened. Next year the Labour Party withdrew its support from his Government, and that meant virtually the close of his political life: for, afflicted by failing memory and power to concentrate, he gradually retired into shadowy backwaters from which he only occasionally emerged—as when he took the platform in 1912 to oppose the Labour Party's amendment to the Constitution, which would have given the Government power to nationalize monopolies and make industrial laws covering the whole Commonwealth.

Yet even among the shadows he remained a national figure—a figure regarded with affection and even reverence. Deakin, it was felt, was the ideal Australian statesman. His dazzling qualities were mixed with a human warmth that gave him ready access to the general mind. His private virtues he carried into the political arena in a way few men have done. He was chivalrous, friendly, humane: he was scrupulous about public moneys. After returning from one European trip he handed back to the Exchequer nearly half the not-extravagant sum given him for private expenses, and this was merely a typical action. His fluid, impulsive nature

was remarkable for its integrity. He wore homely virtues with the grace of a romantic cavalier.

Whatever was weak or ineffective in him as a leader had its root in his secret contempt for public life, his unwillingness (while accepting his role as a politician) to give the full powers of his mind to social and economic affairs. He had hoped to win distinction in literature or philosophy: these were the things he regarded as important, but he recognized, as the years passed, that he had little original talent for either. And so beneath the silver-tongued orator of the platform there developed an introspective, self-critical man, writing voluminous notes in his diary, half-mocking at his own triumphs, at the value of his work: believing there was a metaphysical world more real than the one through which he was fated to move.

THE INDUSTRIALIST

H. V. McKay

THE improvement in the quality of our wheat by William Farrer and others, and the increase in its productivity and capacity to resist disease, were not the only factors in the bringing of Australia to a prominent position in the markets of the world. Machinery suitable to our peculiar conditions was necessary, machinery that would cheapen the cost of production in a country where harvests were comparatively light and labour scarce. There had been the invention by John Ridley in 1842-3 of the stripper, a comparatively primitive device that stripped the wheat-ears from the standing straw with a horizontal comb, the machine being propelled from behind by horses harnessed to a long pole, and the beaters being worked by belts from the wheels. According to Ridley's own account the first suggestion of it came to him from the description of a Roman invention in Loudon's *Encyclopedia of Agriculture*. Being one of the rare men whose social instincts are more highly-developed than their commercial ones, he made no attempt to profit by his invention. He refused to patent it, regarding it as his gift to the country that had made him prosperous.

Later on, Robert Bowyer Smith's stump-jump plough came as a solution to a new problem. In the early 1870s, large areas of rough, lightly-timbered land in Victoria were thrown open for settlement, but the soil could not be cultivated owing to the expense of clearing and grubbing it. Smith, in 1876, constructed a plough with shares that worked independently of one another in a frame: when one of the shares struck a root or stump it rose automatically, passed over the obstacle, and re-entered the ground. The principle had already been

used in horse-hoes and drills, but Smith's plough gave it a much wider application. Without this typical bit of Australian improvisation the great areas of Victorian mallee-land would hardly have been brought into profitable production.

Yet though the country was gradually finding an answer to its agricultural problems through such improvements, progress was slow and lacking in co-ordination. Each invention was the child of particular necessities: the machines had to be forged, for the most part, in small workshops: the market for them was not organized. This is why such significance is attached to the emergence of a man who was at once a natural organizer, a mechanical genius, and a farmer with experience of the soil; a man who (unlike the altruistic Ridley) was determined to pursue his ideas to their commercial end and reap the full profit.

Hugh Victor McKay, was born, one of six brothers, at Raywood, Victoria, in 1865, the son of a Scotch immigrant who had been one of the pioneers. The boy's early years were spent on his father's farm, picking up a knowledge of its working in the intervals of his formal education at the local school, and by the time he was eighteen he had shown such special aptitude for agricultural work that he was given full control of the farm. He was a born innovator. All his energy was spent in devising economical methods of running the place, new ways of saving time and labour; and when the day's work was done he devoted the fag-end of his time to tinkering in his smithy. He was not satisfied with Ridley's stripper, and set out to create a machine that would take the ears from the standing crop and thresh, winnow, and clean the grain in one operation.

By the time he was nineteen he had succeeded. His first model was certainly no thing of beauty: it was constructed of old iron, fencing wire, and odd bits of tin, any kind of junk, in fact, that came to hand; and it was not taken seriously by his neighbours. They regarded young McKay's experiments in the bush smithy as a joke, and warned him that if he spent so much time on his boyish hobbies his farm would soon be in the hands of the banks. But McKay was convinced

that he had invented something of real value, something that would reduce the cost of harvesting from four shillings an acre to a shilling, and when his immediate neighbours laughed at him he set out on a bicycle to look for orders from the farmers of other districts. It was not an easy job. He found, as Ridley had done before him, that men on the land have a natural conservatism, a disinclination to try anything new, and a ready mockery for those who dabble in novelties. When at last he persuaded a farmer in the Riverina to buy one of his harvesters he was faced, as he confessed afterwards, with the most nerve-racking crisis of his life. The machine had to be brought some distance and assembled: would it work when the parts were put together? A sceptical crowd had gathered to watch the trial, and young McKay could hardly bear the suspense of waiting. But when the last gadget had been fitted into its place and the machine moved off into the standing crop all doubts were banished. The new invention worked.

In 1887 he obtained a government premium for the best combined harvesting machine, and a year later moved into Ballarat and established a workshop. Gradually he was breaking down the prejudice of Victorian farmers and extending his market. But his chief interest was still in invention—in improving his machine, and in experimenting with new devices that would make for cheaper production, so that, if necessary, a man might work his farm single-handed. It was a period of small industry, stimulated and protected, in part, by the tariff that David Syme and the *Age* had campaigned for so vigorously. All over the country, workshops had sprung up to provide for local needs, workshops that even turned out modest machines of their own to supply some special demand. In 1874, for instance, John Furphy established his foundry at Shepparton, which later produced a rubbish-cart and a slang-word for the A.I.F. (furphy, a rumour); though perhaps its best claim to fame is that Joseph Furphy worked in it as mechanic and designer while he was writing *Such is Life*. It is interesting to reflect that while McKay was finding scope for his creative genius in the workshop at Ballarat a

more unusual genius was employed in a similar workshop not far away, neither probably aware of the importance of the other.

Of the two, McKay was far surer of immediate recognition and success. The inventive farmboy was changing into the shrewd industrialist, with a metropolitan mind and grandiose plans for the future development of his business. Orders were pouring in from all over the country, and it was necessary to find a better centre than the modest works at Ballarat: he removed to Braybrooke (Sunshine) near Melbourne, where he could lay down the foundations of a model industrial village. Yet it was not entirely the need for expansion that prompted him to move. Like a good many men of his day he looked upon the industrial world as the creation of enterprising individuals—their creation and their happy hunting-ground. He had built up a business of his own and was intolerant of any interference, whether by his own workmen or the State, with the wages and conditions he decreed in it. Ballarat was within the ambit of the wages-board system, but at Sunshine he would be just outside the metropolitan area, and therefore not subject to any limitations. At least so he thought.

Like Ford, Lever, and the industrialists of the old world he dreamed of a community that would be centred round his own factory, a community of happy, contented workpeople, living in the houses he built for them, earning good wages and enjoying reasonable comfort; loyal to the hand that paid them, and removed, as far as possible, from the temptations of city life and the distracting ideas of class-conflict. At Sunshine he endeavoured to give reality to his dream. He bought thirty-five acres of land and parcelled it out, assisting large numbers of employees to build their homes near the factory, and himself undertaking the work of road-making, the reticulation of water and electric light. The sub-division provided for allotments with fifty-feet frontages: there would be no slums. And though in a country like Australia, he could not boycott unionism among his employees, he resolved to discourage it as much as possible, to demonstrate that there was

no real need for it and to maintain the principles of the "open shop."

Meanwhile the market for his harvesters was extending overseas. In 1902 his brother Sam had come back from the Boer War, and joined the firm. Feeling that the demand for machines was limited (especially since a severe drought was raging in Victoria and farmers were being plunged deeply in debt) Sam McKay suggested the exploration of new fields, and left for the Argentine, taking fifty harvesters with him. The results of his trip exceeded all expectations. A strong demand for the Sunshine Harvester began to come from South America, and a little later from Canada, even from Siberia, where agricultural conditions were much the same as in Australia. The machine that had been constructed so crudely in a bush smithy was making its way in the world. Wide vistas were opening for its inventor.

But the agents of oversea firms did not leave him in peace to exploit his expanding market. They were uneasy at the success of this firm that was beginning to supply the Australian farmer with everything he wanted in the way of machinery. The general distrust of local manufactures, which for so long had been a firm asset for the importing-agents, was being dissipated. There were attempts to buy McKay out, finally to strangle him.

"We'll beat McKay in the end," the representative of one American trust said, "we have unlimited money behind us, and even if we have to work at a loss for three years we can do it."

This was the situation when McKay gave evidence before the Tariff Commission of 1905. It was at a time when Alfred Deakin was working out his ideas for a new system of Protection, which was to impose certain excise duties that would be remitted on goods manufactured under conditions certified by the President of the Arbitration Court as "fair and reasonable." Within a couple of years the New Protection Act was passed and the Arbitration Court instituted. The first manufacturer to apply for a certificate under the Act was Hugh McKay.

It was perhaps a little ironic that a man who prided himself on his individualism, a man who had fought hard against any outside interference with his business, should be so ready to accept the protection of the State. Logically he should have resisted its coddling, and welcomed, as a stimulus, the competition that was the life of trade, according to the old doctrine of *laisser faire*. But McKay was not logical: he was the child of a growing society, a society *sans doctrines*, in which problems were solved by experiment and a man could take advantage of any idea that was useful for the moment. The New Protection itself was a rather specious device, intended to benefit workmen and employers at the same time. The manufacturer was to be protected against outside competition, the workman to be protected against the manufacturer. Constitutional limits (the inability of the Commonwealth to make general laws about wages) were partly responsible for it. It was an attempt to transcend those limits, to impose industrial conditions, not directly, but in a slanting way through the only machinery, the Customs, which was in the full control of the Commonwealth.

The "Harvester" case that rose out of McKay's application has come to be one of historical importance. In order to satisfy himself that the conditions of manufacture in McKay's works were "fair and reasonable" the President of the Arbitration Court (Judge Higgins) had to probe into the whole question of wages and standards of living, examining workpeople's budgets and current prices. What did Parliament mean by "fair and reasonable"? How should such conditions be determined? The Judge decided to adopt a standard based on "the normal needs of the average employee, regarded as a human being living in a civilized community." He finally refused to certify that any wages lower than £2 2s. per week were fair and reasonable. This was well above the average wage for unskilled men, which at the time (1907) could not have been more than 5s. 6d. a day. The new finding would have meant raising the standard by 27 per cent.

McKay's application for exemption was not granted. Having failed he refused to pay the excise duties and defended,

before the High Court, an action to recover them. He succeeded, by a majority of three judges to two, on the ground that the Act was not really a Taxation Act at all, but one to regulate labour conditions and, as such, beyond the competence of the Federal Parliament.

The case, it must be admitted, shows a certain slimness in McKay's character, a native shrewdness, a belief that in law and business any means might be used for a desired end. He had not, in Court, raised the point that the application of the Act might be invalid, but when the decision went against him he was quick to question its authority. Perhaps he was being driven back, after all, on his deepest conviction that a man should fight continually against any outside interference with his business. Generous in impulse, democratic in habit, he still maintained a stubborn front against the unionism which, defeated in the early nineties, was being built up again in another, but less virile, form under the aegis of the new Arbitration Court. When in 1911 the members of the Agricultural Implement Makers' Union tried to enforce the principle of the "closed shop" at Sunshine he resisted them by every means in his power. It was not that, personally, he would have been affected greatly by the men's demands. The fight for union organization had, in a sense, been already won. Only forty-three men stood out from the union, and of these only a dozen were in McKay's service. But, with his fixed idea that his works were his own personal domain, he was ready to face a three months' strike rather than consent to the men in them being subject to any compulsion from outside "agitators."

"I am not going to force any of my workmen to join the union," he said, "and I am not going to allow any other men to force them."

Yet when the three-months' strike was over he met the men coming back with his usual good-humour, greeting them as casually as if they had been away for a holiday.

In this he was a typical Australian industrialist, ready to respond to some spirit of equality in the air, to temper with social easiness the economic power he asserted. Apart from

his personal qualities—vigour, enterprise, tenacity—his importance to the country lay in his experience of its agricultural needs and his ability to satisfy them. His inventive genius was all the more valuable in that it had first found scope on a farm; so was his talent for organization. A good deal of country labour has been lightened by this imaginative ploughboy who hated to see a man at any work that might be done more easily by a machine: labour has been lightened and the wealth of the country increased. Of how many eminent politicians could the same be said? Perhaps it was fortunate, on the whole, that McKay was not allowed to spend his extraordinary energy upon politics. He did, indeed, stand for Ballarat as an anti-Labour candidate in 1913, but was defeated. He never attempted to enter what is called "public life" again.

THE BANKER

Sir Denison Miller

THE history of banking in Australia goes back to 1817, when a group of Sydney merchants organized the Bank of New South Wales, in an effort to combat the evils arising from the lack of stable currency. It issued its own notes, which for a time were expressed in Spanish dollars, these having been a familiar medium of exchange ever since the beginning of the colony. A somewhat shady atmosphere seems to have surrounded those first ventures in banking: money-lending was not a profession held in high esteem by the governing class, military or official. It is true that Wentworth was one of the earliest directors of the Bank of New South Wales, but another was William Terry, a typical ex-convict of the merchant class, half-gangster and half gombeen-man, who through pawnbroking, rum-selling, and trafficking in property, accumulated a considerable fortune, dying in 1838 worth half a million. But in a developing country banking was so essential to the mercantile and pastoral life that it quickly grew in importance and prestige. In less than a century after the first bank was founded, the twenty-three operating in Australia had an aggregate capital and reserve fund of £31,606,875—assets that have trebled since. Banking has, in fact, proved to be one of our most profitable industries.

Little wonder, then, that the first Labour politicians to enter Parliament claimed participation in the profits for the people on whose industry the structure of banking was based. One of the planks in the Labour platform of 1891 was the establishment of a national bank. But finance was a mysterious world to the Labour representatives of those days, and they were easily persuaded that any attempt to create a people's bank would come to disaster and discredit the party. It was

not until some time after the Commonwealth was founded that the question was brought into the political foreground, and then largely through the agency of one man who had made finance a life-study.

King O'Malley was a Canadian by birth, but he was brought up in America and had come to Australia for his health. Finance was certainly not a mysterious world to him, for his relatives had been bankers, and he had served for ten years in an American bank, mastering the abracadabra of the profession. He believed fervently in public control of banking, and advocated in and out of season a national bank for the Commonwealth. But there was an American extravagance about his personality, a deliberate cult of the Wild West, wide-brimmed hats and picturesque drawl, that made many of his associates distrust his theories. Although he was successful in getting the idea of a Commonwealth Bank incorporated in the Labour "fighting platform" of 1910, there was an inclination to shelve it when the party came into power. It was the wild O'Malley's notion, and that was enough for the cautious Andrew Fisher. Instead of making O'Malley Treasurer he took the office himself and edged the dangerous innovator into the Ministry for Home Affairs, where he was forced to concern himself with other things. Yet by secret work among members of the caucus, O'Malley won support for his idea, and by October 1911 a majority demanded that the Prime Minister should bring down a Bill for the establishment of a national bank.

Thus, against opposition inside the party and without, was the Commonwealth Bank launched. It might have been received with more organized hostility from the other banks if its inception had not come as a surprise, but the fears of those interested had been lulled to rest by the silence of O'Malley and the apparent unwillingness of the Fisher Government to play with his ideas. In the House criticism was active but ill-directed. "Sovereigns for all," gibed Sir Joseph Cook. And the cartoonists of the day pictured unionists in bowyangs surging up to the doors of the bank, clamouring for overdrafts. But several members of the Opposition sup-

ported the idea of a national bank, seeing in it (for one thing) an easy way of transferring the State debts to the Commonwealth, though it was not until 1928 that this task was accomplished.

The Commonwealth Bank Act of 1911 provided that:

The Bank shall, in addition to any other powers conferred by this Act, have power

(a) to carry on the general business of banking;
(b) to acquire and hold land on any tenure;
(c) to receive money on deposit, either for a fixed term or on account;
(d) to make advances by way of loan, overdraft, or otherwise;
(e) to discount bills and drafts;
(f) to issue bills and drafts, and grant letters of credit;
(g) to deal in exchanges, specie, bullion, gold dust, gold and precious metals;
(h) to borrow money; and
(i) to do anything incidental to any of its powers.

The Act placed a governor in charge, and gave him great authority, so great that it was obvious from the beginning that the bank's future would depend to a great extent on the man appointed. This happened to be Denison Miller, an official of the Bank of New South Wales. Probably Denison Miller was not the first man approached, nor the second, but when Andrew Fisher invited him to Melbourne and showed him a rough draft of the Act he had imagination enough to realize that he was not being asked to drop a good bone for a shadow.

"I could see what wide powers were provided for the man who took the position," he said afterwards, "and I accepted it."

It was a happy appointment. Denison Miller had just the right mixture of caution and initiative for the direction of an enterprise such as this. Spare, wiry, accustomed to

shouldering responsibilities, he had an enthusiasm for public service and, what was more, an ability to infect others with it. Born near Wollongong, in 1860, the son of a schoolteacher, he had entered the Bank of New South Wales as a lad of sixteen, and had been sent to Deniliquin in the Riverina. There he had gained a knowledge of the country and its resources that was to prove useful to him later on. He applied himself energetically to the study of banking and within ten years was assistant accountant: he had risen to the position of metropolitan inspector when he was brought to Fisher's notice as a potential governor for the Commonwealth Bank. But, though the *Economist* had some generous words to say about his suitability for the position, he was unknown to the general public. Who is this Denison Miller? people asked.

There was no flourish of trumpets at the new bank's foundation. It started business unpretentiously in a small upstairs room in Collins Street, Melbourne, with the assistance of a messenger-boy, lent by the Treasury. Denison Miller was cautious in picking his staff. He was anxious that his assistants should have, not merely capacity and knowledge, but a belief in the bank's future. As for finance, the Commonwealth Bank Act provided for £1,000,000 subscribed capital; but Denison Miller resolved to do without this, and began to open savings banks throughout Australia, thus avoiding the payment of interest to any one but his own depositors. The savings bank idea was a success. In six months Denison Miller could open for general business with a working capital, and on the first day received £2,368,126 in deposits, the greater part of which belonged to the account of the Commonwealth Government.

It must be said that the Commonwealth Bank came to birth under favourable conditions. Times were good; there was no need for other banks to try to strangle this new rival in its cradle. The wave of Australian progress was just then on an ascending curve. But Denison Miller knew that the position of the bank was precarious. The idea had not altogether been accepted by the community. It was looked

upon as an experiment, a socialistic experiment, and the gibes about "sovereigns for everybody" had turned into jokes about "Fisher's flimsies." At any moment this vague distrust might be directed towards the political destruction of the bank. Miller took pains not to antagonize his rivals. Interest on fixed deposits was set at ½ per cent lower than theirs, and the charges on loans and overdrafts were approximately the customary ones. Denison Miller's policy was to enter into competition with the private banks as little as possible.

Yet the bank flourished from the beginning. People soon came to understand that its capital was the credit of the country, and that it could be made an instrument of national security. Minor concessions led the small depositor to look upon it favourably. There was no charge on accounts that did not drop below £50 in any one year, and cheques drawn upon the bank could be collected without exchange in any part of the Commonwealth. Several of the States surrendered their savings bank business to it, and it became increasingly patronized by Governments, trade unions, and public bodies. From its inception it had, of course, been the banker for the Commonwealth Government.

But it was the war that brought it, at a bound, to a dominating position in the Australian economy. At first its influence was only felt in comparatively small things. During August 1914 it was able to grant the Commonwealth Government an overdraft of £100,000 in London, and next month to make it a loan of £120,000. For the Ministry of Defence it arranged for the provision of funds so that departmental officers should not have to wait for a Supply Bill before purchasing, for instance, horses for the Expeditionary Forces. In a hundred different ways it helped to meet an unexpected situation. The ugly duckling King O'Malley had hatched was suddenly revealed as a quite valuable bird, useful not only to the Government but to individual Australians travelling abroad who wanted to redeem their notes and silver.

The financing of Australia's share in the war set it more serious tasks. It was soon apparent that the abnormal ex-

penditure could not be met by the usual method of floating loans on the London market: in 1915, for the first time, the Federal Government was forced to appeal to the Australian people themselves. Naturally an atmosphere of doubt surrounded the experiment. Australia's financial resources were practically an unknown quantity: the general public had never before been asked to subscribe to a large loan. Yet in six years the enormous sums required (over £250,000,000) were provided, and the business of financing the war and the demobilization carried through.

It was a triumph for the bank and its governor. Not only had the flotations been made successfully, but they had been made at the low cost of 5s. 7d. per cent, which contrasted sharply with the £2 7s. 1d. per cent that had been paid for loans floated on the oversea market between 1910 and 1915. The bank had, in fact, saved the Government a direct amount of over £5,000,000, as well as making a small profit for itself.

More important still was the work it did for the primary producer. It financed pools of wheat, wool, meat, butter, cheese, rabbits and sugar to the total amount of £436,000,000, thus bringing him security. Transport facilities were lacking to the markets overseas. It found £2,000,000 to allow the Government to purchase a line of steamers, which operated till the end of the war. In the chaotic period of demobilization it provided money for housing, and supported local government bodies with loans they could not obtain abroad in the conditions then existing—loans for the construction of roads, tramways, harbours, gasworks, and electric-power plants. Thus a difficult time of adjustment was tided over with a minimum of disturbance.

In November 1920 an Amending Act was brought in, entrusting the Australian note issue, which had been a function of the Treasury, to a department of the Commonwealth Bank. This was a national recognition that the bank was now a going concern, and, curiously enough, the Bill was introduced by Sir Joseph Cook who, eight years before, had ridiculed the possibilities of people's banking. "The Bank," he said, "is in closer touch than the Treasury could be with

the requirements of the community." And his original Bill even provided that the profits of the note issue might be used for the ordinary business of the bank. This clause was criticized, though, as giving the Commonwealth Bank an unfair advantage over its rivals, and Sir Joseph Cook withdrew it. The profits of the note issue were to go to the Treasury, and they soon formed a valuable addition to the revenue. One permanent asset created by this source of income was the Transcontinental Line.

But the transference of the note issue marked a change in the autocratic government of the bank. It was felt that the issue of notes was too vital a matter to be left to any single person, and yet Denison Miller was unwilling to have his control of the general banking pass into the hands of a board. A compromise was arranged, the creation of a distinct department, managed by four directors, for the issue of notes. Thus began the division of the bank's functions, which was later to hamper its growth and turn it from a revolutionary instrument of change into a group of government departments.

There had always been a definite undercurrent of objection to the vast powers exercised by Denison Miller. Undoubtedly when he was appointed the rapid growth of the bank was not foreseen: and even people who supported the idea of national banking felt, as a matter of principle, that such a great undertaking should not be controlled by one man. But Denison Miller's direction had been so brilliant, his personal prestige had become so great, that abstract criticisms were silenced. Could a board, it was asked, have shown the spring and initiative with which he had faced the many difficulties of the war-period? Wasn't it likely that such a board would have been composed of men more conservative than Miller, more disinclined to experiment, perhaps tied through their business interests to existing financial institutions? Denison Miller's position was too firm to be challenged. He was appointed to a second term of office in June 1919.

The opponents of the bank, though, wished to confine its activities. They maintained that its freedom from taxation

gave it an advantage in competition, an advantage that was pressed home by its control of the savings banks in most of the States. They were alarmed by the way its branches and agencies were extending. The war had shown the need of a central bank, a clearing house for private banks, and they proposed that this should be the Commonwealth Bank's function in future. It should, in fact, be converted into a banker's bank, instead of being allowed to develop further as a social experiment. Denison Miller's leaning towards innovation was questioned. In the latter half of 1920, when the great banks of the world were setting out on a policy of deflation, he brought the credit of the Commonwealth Bank to the help of the Australian people, and released £23,000,000 of additional currency, thus staving off a slump. And there was a hint of fresh departure from tradition in his assurance to a deputation of the unemployed in 1921 that he was prepared to finance Australia for productive purposes as he had done for war.

A dangerous proposal! Miller's critics knew that there could be no political interference with the management of the bank, but its field of activity could be limited by Statute. Before the hostile criticism had come to a head, however, Denison Miller died. It is little use to speculate on how he would have met this criticism if he had lived out his second term of office. He was a man of his day, the creative part of him roused and nourished by the opportunities almost accidentally given him. There is no record of any general opinions he might have had about the nature of his work and the possibilities of national banking. He had the typical Australian's faculty for combining conventionality in thought with enterprise in action. He liked his Saturday golf: he presided over charities: he thought one of the most inspiring books ever written was *The Message to Garcia.* Yet though his personality was neither dramatic nor colourful it made a deep impression on the general mind. No public man has ever been paid a more spontaneous tribute of respect and affection than Denison Miller was by the huge crowd that followed him to his grave in May, 1923.

THE SOLDIER

Sir John Monash

It is hard to say what turned the mind of John Monash, as a young undergraduate at Melbourne University, toward soldiering. Perhaps it was something in his blood. In pre-war days most of the names associated with our military defence had a foreign sound—Chauvel, Rosenthal, Ramaciotti, Bruche, Sellheim, Ricardo—to pick out but a few at random. It is unlikely that this is mere coincidence. More probably it is to be accounted for by the fact that, in spite of Lawson's "Star of Australasia," most young Australians of Anglo-Saxon descent had no belief that war could ever touch them. They did not imagine themselves fighting for "right or a grand mistake," or even in defence of their native land. War belonged to the past, or to a remote Europe of ancient feuds and jealousies: its problems had no reality for them, and the flummery of peace-time soldiering no attraction. Compulsory service was established (because of a new-born fear of Japan) a few years before the war, but by then John Monash was a colonel, in command of the Australian Intelligence Corps, an officer with a varied experience behind him.

Part of this experience was in the domain of formal education. Born in Melbourne in 1865, he had done an Arts course at the University, then had turned to law, graduating as LL.B. in 1890, by which time he was a lieutenant in the Garrison Artillery. Then he had taken up engineering, gaining his degree as Master of Civil Engineering in 1893, and shortly afterwards setting up in business. It was engineering that was to be, after all, the main interest of his life. Significantly he took no part in the Boer War: this, probably, was a matter of principle. He was not looking

for adventure. Soldiering was all very well, and he was prepared to give a large part of his leisure to problems of defence, but he was essentially a civilian, with a civilian's outlook, and believed that preoccupation with purely military affairs cramped the mind. "Don't let your son go into the regular Army," he told a mother, "it's the narrowest of all training." It was his strength that he had not only a more diverse experience but a greater intellectual range than the average military man. He read widely: he had some knowledge of medicine: he rarely missed a good concert. In his own profession he devoted particular attention to concrete structural work, and was one of the pioneers of this form of building.

Such was the man who at fifty was called upon to take charge of the 4th Brigade of the A.I.F., leaving in December 1914 for the theatre of war. He can have had no great personal ambition at the time. The appointment came to him as a matter of course: acceptance of it was a duty. And there were several officers senior to him in rank, particularly Brudenell White, "by far the ablest soldier Australia has turned out." Besides he had none of the perverse romanticism that had made one distinguished regular give as his toast in Melbourne a year before, "More bloody wars and quick promotions!"

"I hate the business of war," he wrote, "the horror of it, the waste, the destruction, the inefficiency. Many a time I could have wished that wounds or sickness or a breakdown of health would have enabled me to retire honourably from the field of action—like so many other senior officers."

This was his reaction from the Gallipoli campaign, which was his first experience in the field. He had come out of it unscathed and with credit, but there had been few demands on his particular capacities and he was keenly conscious of the muddle and waste that had made the whole operation ineffective. Essentially it had been a soldier's campaign and the hero of it was the ordinary Digger. But the bravery and dash that had marked the night-landing on an unknown shore, the first assaults on the scrub-covered hills, had not

received the whole-hearted backing they deserved. An heroic force was allowed to wear itself out in the dispiriting task of hanging on to a few lines of ridges along the coast, until sickness, heavy casualties, and the rain and sleet of early winter made withdrawal inevitable.

Monash maintained his reputation in Gallipoli, but did not add to it in any notable way.

"His service to some extent nourished doubts," says Captain Liddell Hart, the British military authority. "He was by no means the born leader of tradition, delighting in danger: but if he was not to be seen much in the front trenches he covered his deficiency in observation by a mastery of reports, and a masterly organization of intelligence."

Such "doubts" might have been working in Birdwood's mind when the Fourth Division was in process of formation. The Australian Government was anxious that either Monash or White, both Australian officers, should have charge of it, but Birdwood preferred to entrust it to Cox, a Kitchener man, and an old Indian colleague.

Monash's qualities were recognized, however, when, after a brief service with his brigade in France, he was sent to England in July 1916 to organize and train the Third Division. At last he was getting some scope for his particular powers, and was determined that his division should be the most thoroughly trained in the A.I.F. All the circumstances combined to make this possible. He had good material to work upon, and the camps and conveniences of Salisbury Plain: besides he had the advantage of knowing the theatre of war in which his troops were likely to be used. How different from the conditions under which other divisions had completed their training! They had to contend with the fierce Egyptian climate: they lacked equipment and suitable parade-grounds: they were called on to undertake the strenuous work of building field-fortifications in the desert to defend the Suez Canal Zone. An atmosphere of the impromptu, the amateur rehearsal, had hovered over all military organization in the days of 1915. The war was still a fluid thing, subject to unexpected changes, and the

result might be seriously affected by some victory or reverse in Egypt or Mesopotamia. Now conditions were settling down, methods and objectives becoming more defined. It was accepted that everything depended on the trench-warfare in France.

And in France Monash's capacities as a divisional commander soon made themselves felt. The Australian forces, though under the general command of Birdwood, were not a cohesive body, in spite of the desire of the Commonwealth Government that they should be kept together. The fixed formation in France was the Army Corps, which was placed in control of a particular terrain; its railheads, its roads, and its sources of supply. The composition of such Army Corps was continually changing: a division might find itself drafted into one or another according to the needs of the moment. The division, in fact, became a unit, with its own character and its own tradition. This system, although not satisfactory to the Australian forces as a whole, gave divisional leaders a chance to show their quality, and Monash made the most of such opportunities as came to him. He knew his own particular talents, knew how they could be used. There was his thoroughness, his passion for detail. He believed that if a plan were carefully prepared and lucidly explained to every one responsible for carrying it out, there was a moral certainty of its proving successful. He himself had a particular gift for lucidity, and encouraged his officers to cultivate it. Before the battle of Messines he had a relief-map of the terrain prepared at a spot in the rear, so that the men could study it at their leisure.

"Battles should be won before the barrage opens," he said once.

But Monash's great quality, after all, was his moral courage, his readiness to accept responsibility. It was tested to the full when, resting in the south of France during March 1918, he was overtaken by the alarming news that Gough's Fifth Army had broken all along the front it was holding, and that the Germans were pouring through the gap towards Amiens. Without delay he rushed back to the

scene of action, and found everything in appalling confusion. Amiens was already under bombardment and civilians were beginning to pour out of the town: the roads were choked with traffic: at Doullens the streets were full of wild-looking soldier-stragglers, hungry and panic-stricken. "It almost looked," he wrote afterwards, "as if the whole British Army in this part of the world was in a state of rout."

It was difficult to find any one in authority. All head-quarters—divisional, corps, and army—were moving rapidly backwards and did not remain more than a few hours in any one town. At Mondicourt in a disused château Monash at last came upon a responsible staff, and as he entered the dark building filled with dishevelled and weary-eyed officers, a general sitting in a corner poring over a candle-lit map looked up with relief.

"Thank Heaven, the Australians at last."

Monash was given the task of holding the Germans between the Ancre and the Somme. Working day and night he gathered the battalions together, by motor-bus, by train, and deployed them across the path of the advancing enemy. There was some heavy fighting, but the German push had lost its first impetus. Gradually the attacking waves spent themselves as they beat up against the barrier. The people of Amiens could breathe freely again: the situation was saved.

When a couple of months later Birdwood was given command of one of the British Armies there was hardly any question as to who should step into his shoes. Monash had earned his right to take charge of the Australian Army Corps. Not only had he proved his tactical ability, but he had won the confidence of the troops in the field. And this in spite of his reserved bearing, a touch of aloofness in his manner, a lack of either the breezy egalitarianism of the "Digger" officers or the graceful condescension of the English. No one could pretend that there was any democratic easiness of approach about Monash. He could not assume a hail-fellow-well-met attitude with his men, greet wounded Diggers at the back of the line with Birdwood's cheery, "Well, boys,

anxious to get back and have another crack at the Boche?" But in the fourth year of war this kind of amiable greeting had begun to wear thin, and was given a ribald name. It belonged to a more lighthearted period, to the pre-Somme stage of hostilities, to the days when the adventure was fresh and goodwill lurked everywhere, even in the voices of fussy ladies at charity bazaars and patronizing curates at the back of the line. Among his men, there was no criticism of Monash's detachment, his masculine brusqueness. They were in keeping with the tone of the hard-bitten fighting-force the Australian Corps had become.

From May 1918, when Monash took command, till the hour when the Armistice was signed, the history of the Corps was one of successive triumphs.

"Feed your troops on victory," was a favourite saying of his. And though the words suggest a gift bestowed from above, it is not likely that Monash thought of them in that way. He knew the temper of his troops: he knew that, by the middle of 1918, the time was ripe for sustained attack. Victory was something that could be assured them by efficiency and bold initiative in high quarters. As yet the whole of the Australian forces were not together, the First Division being involved in action under the British XVth Corps: indeed it was not till the beginning of the great offensive in August that they were finally united. But by that time Monash's status as a leader was already well-established, particularly through the battle of Hamel, an action so brilliant, so superbly carried out, that the Australian general's orders and battle-plans were republished by General Headquarters as a model for the whole British Army.

The principles that determined his battle-tactics he enumerated more than once. First was the "limited objective," which meant that in every offensive operation, large or small, a definite limit was set—generally a limit of frontage or depth of penetration—not to be exceeded in any circumstances whatsoever. The second was fixity of plan. Once a plan had been thought out and promulgated it was not to be altered. For this principle he was prepared to fight, as he showed

when preparations were being made for the battle of Hamel. Several American regiments had been allotted to the Australian Corps for training and trench-experience, and Monash had arranged to include a contingent of them, amounting to about two thousand men, in his plans for the attack. About three days before the appointed date General Rawlinson informed him that, the matter having been considered, only half the Americans were to be used. This was annoying, but it was not then too late to rearrange the distribution. When, however, a further order forbade him to use any American troops, he was thoroughly exasperated. At that moment the whole of the infantry destined for the assault at dawn were well on their way to their battle-stations: any attempt to draw the Americans out would lead to dangerous gaps in the line. Monash was moved to meet Rawlinson and under cover of what he called "diplomatic language" to give his ultimatum:

"Any interference now and the battle must be called off."

His firmness achieved its object. The Commander-in-Chief was communicated with, and the prohibition was withdrawn.

Fixity of plan! It seems to imply the rigidity usually associated with the German cast of mind, and particularly with German military tactics. And its danger lies on its face, in the likelihood of the whole intricate machine being held up because of a breakdown in some particular part. But Monash knew that he was dealing with men and officers who possessed personal initiative and battle-discipline in a very high degree. He could afford to be rigid because they were elastic, able to adapt themselves to minor checks and unforeseen situations. Besides he took care that the meaning and object of an action should be clear to all concerned. His own orders were written by himself with pains and precision, and he thoroughly explained them to his brigade commanders, who in turn worked them out in detail for company officers and men.

"A perfected modern battle-plan," he has said, "is like nothing so much as a score for an orchestral composition, where the various arms and units are the instruments, and

the tasks they perform are their respective musical phrases. Every individual unit must make its entry precisely at the proper moment and play its phrase in the general harmony."

But Monash's success did not depend on perfection of plans alone. There was a dynamic quality in him that made him seek decisions. It was owing at least partly to his impulse that a general quality of aggression spread through the Allied armies in the summer of 1918. He continually urged it on his superiors: he was ready himself to prove its effectiveness. The successful action at Hamel marked the turning of the tide: the Australian offensive of 8 August, "Ludendorff's Black Day," was the beginning of the end. From then on, the Australian Army Corps was continuously active, delivering a succession of shattering blows that did not cease till the Hindenburg Line had been stormed and the German forces were in full retreat. The record of those sixty-nine days is starred with feats of individual and collective heroism, but the most remarkable thing about them was the corps spirit displayed. The Australian forces had never fought with more éclat, more confidence, than in that final phase, after four years of suffering, attrition, and disillusionment. It was not merely Monash's vanity that made him believe his leadership had a good deal to do with it. He had his vanity, but he knew that the spring with which the men responded to his demands came partly from their pride in being led by one of their own countrymen.

He has been criticized for not sparing his men, for being too ready to threw them into action. His own reply is adequate enough. It was not merely a matter of feeding troops on victory. Aggression was, in the long run, less costly than inactivity. If the war was not ended in the summer of 1918, he argued, there would be another long winter campaign, with its certain heavy losses. It might be that, through lack of reinforcements, the structure of the Corps would have to be broken up, brigades disbanded or grouped with others; he was already resisting such a proposal, for it affected not only his own pride but that of his men. In matters concerning

their comfort and welfare he was not callous. It is true that he was in favour of instituting the death-penalty for serious military offences, in spite of the horror the idea aroused in Australia. But in this he was only following a fixed Army tradition: deserters had always been shot: besides, he was subject to continual pressure in the matter from those above him—the British High Command felt that there were too many Australian stragglers behind the lines. In most things Monash's point of view was that of his troops. It had been a frequent complaint that when it was a question of rushing troops into the front line there was always plenty of transport available, but when they were relieved after a long, exhausting spell in the trenches they had to tramp back through miles of mud and slush to their billets. Monash saw to it that this was remedied. In pushing forward the claims of his men he was not hampered, as a British regular officer might have been, by the reflection that he had to consider his own career in the Army after the war.

Monash never forgot that he was a civilian, an Australian citizen, responsible to his country for the men temporarily in his charge. He never forgot, either, that they were really civilians, too, the only voluntary soldiers on the Western Front. He attributed their battle-discipline to lessons they had mastered in their pre-war lives. "The Australian is accustomed to team-work. He learns it on the sporting field, in his industrial organizations and in his political activities." The problems of war itself differed in no fundamental way from those of civil life: every task and every situation had to be dealt with on the basis of simple business propositions. He had no romantic feeling about war: the glamour of military associations had little hold on him. While on leave in London he liked to doff his military uniform and move among the crowd in ordinary clothes. It pleased him, he said, to be edged into the gutter by civilians and young subalterns. And when, at the end of the war, he was asked what he was going to do he replied with a quick:

"What are the other Diggers going to do? Look for their old jobs."

A saying has long been current that, if the war had lasted much longer Sir John Monash would have probably been created Commander-in-Chief of the British Armies on the Western Front. "Since the War," writes Lloyd George in his memoirs, "I have been told by men whose judgment I value that the only soldier thrown up by the war on the British side who possessed the necessary qualifications was a Dominion general." And that the reference is to Monash is made clear by what Captain Liddell Hart, the foremost British military authority, wrote a little later: "If the war had lasted another year Sir John Monash would almost certainly have risen to an army command and might even have risen to Commander-in-Chief. He probably had the greatest capacity for command in modern war among all who held command."

Such an appointment could only have been made in the teeth of long-standing prejudices. Monash had many things against him. He was an Australian, a civilian, a Jew. There was almost nothing of the traditional British Army leader in this stocky, undistinguished-looking man who had never attended a staff-college or cultivated the social graces. That his elevation to high rank could have been even considered shows what a revolution in military values the war had created. But it shows also the deep impression Monash had made. With no support but his own innate qualities and the valour of the men behind him he had cut through many barbed-wire entanglements and taken up a prominent position on the world's stage.

It is to his credit that he was not anxious to keep it. When he returned to Australia he made no effort to capitalize his prestige by standing for Parliament. He put aside his uniform and went "back to concrete" as he had always intended to do. The remaining years of life were spent in public work. He accepted an appointment as organizer of the great electrical works at Yallourn which were to supply Melbourne with power from the brown-coalfields. He busied himself with the affairs of the University. A hardly noticeable figure

in the crowd he caught the morning train to his office, slipped into his seat at concerts, took his place at committee meetings, knowing a little while before he died that his strained heart gave him the alternatives of a short spell of active work before a quick death, or a long spell as an invalid. It was like him to make the choice without hesitation.

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